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## the Thousands to sue over slimming pills

By Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

Tens of thousands of overweight Americans are preparing to sue the manufacturers of two of the most popular slimming pills what lawyers are predicting could be the mest compensation case since asbestos. The worldwide withdrawal of the drugs spfluramine and dexfenfluramine last so itember after they were linked with heart Problems has triggered a feeding frenzy ents with the prospect of multi-million dollar suits.

sued in 1996 in the UK but there have been be affected. Cases have been filed in know how many will translate into law suits no reports of patients suffering the heart problem side-effects and no arrangements have been made by the Department of Health for tracing patients who may have taken the drugs. As yet, there are no reports of imminent British legal actions.

A spokeswoman for Alexander Harris, the Manchester solicitors who specialise in medical litigation, said: "We have had a couple of inquiries but interest is only just beginning. It usually follows what happens in the US.

More than 60,000 prescriptions for in the US have taken the pills and studies An estimated four to six million patients fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine were is-

every US state and a steering group of lawyers are meeting early next month to co-ordinate them in a mass action to be heard before a judge in Philadelphia.

Larry Burman, a Philadelphia lawyer and member of the steering group, said: "There are hundreds of cases filed in the federal courts and hundreds and hundreds in the state court system. Each could be one person or 20. A lot of people are saying this could be one of the biggest mass tort cases [class actions] ever to hit the court system."

Paul Rheingold, a New York lawyer said: 'We have 3,000 cases we are looking into and we are filing five or six a day. We don't

but we have 100 so far. I would guess the total for the US will involve 100,000 individuals, one of the biggest actions ever."

Diet pills became a craze in America four years ago. The most popular prescription was for "fen-phen", the appetite suppressant fenfluramine which was combined with the stimulant drug phentermine to increase its effectiveness. The US Food and Drugs Administration asked the manufacturers of fenfluramine to withdraw the product after studies showed 30 per cent of patients taking the combination had abnormal echocardiograms, indicating heart defects. The fen-phen combination never

caught on in the UK prior to the withdrawal of fenfluramine.

Some patients have been found to have damaged heart valves and pulmonary hypertension - increased resistance to the flow of blood in the lungs. The New England Journal of Medicine reported last August the case of a 29-year-old woman who died after taking the combination for only 23 days. She was five-feet five-inches tall

and weighed 13-and-a-half stone. Mr Rheingold said: "If you are talking pulmonary hypertension or valve replacement, those are million dollar cases. Others could have a claim for psychological damage. But many may have been unaware

anything was wrong until they had an echocardiogram."

Fenfluramine, which is thought to the cause of the problems, was introduced in the Sixties and has been taken by millions of people. Dexfenfluramine, which is half the molecule of fenfluramine, has also been withdrawn. It was developed to retain the appetite suppressant properties but with fewer side effects of dry mouth, dizziness and digestive problems. Phentermine re-

mains on the market. Experts are puzzled why it has taken so long for the danger to emerge. One possibility is that it may only apply to the combination treatment.

## Sinn Fein ban fails to please either side

David McKittrick and Correspondent

SINN FEIN was barred yesterday from the Irish multiparty talks for the next two weeks. The long-awaited move drew protests from both Unionists and republicans -Unionists because they wanted permanent exclusion, and republicans because they wanted no expulsion at all.

The British and Iris ernments, in excluding Sinn Fein until 9 March, seemed at the same time concerned to act as leniently as possible. It has been clear for some time that Sian Fein would be penalised following two recent IRA killings, but London and Dublin have given the impression that me measure would be taken with reluctance.

Both governments had concluded that Sinn Fein had to go, but both want to have them back in to participate in negotiations as the talks approach their May deadline. The Irish foreign minister, David Andrews, paid tribute to Sinn Fein's "valuable contribution"

**⊉** The Northern Ireland Secreary, Mo Mowlam, said contact with Sinn Fein would be maintained during its absence. Vercome She added: "There is little time left now until May. Both governments are determined to work with the parties in the coming six weeks. We want as many parties as possible, ncluding Sinn Fein, to have opportunity to their . ... contribute '

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The decision was condemned by Sinn Fein's president, Gerry Adams, who said he was seeking urgent meetings with Tony Blair and the Iaoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Sinn Fein has abandoned its attempt in the Dublin High Court to obtain a legal re-

straint on the governments. Describing the current situation as a crisis and "a huge setback" for the peace process, Mr Adams declared: "The de-

cision is disgraceful. The process by which it was reached lacks any notion of natural justice. Sinn Fein is out, but Sinn Fein is not down." He said there was palpable anger in nationalist areas, and

added: "I appeal to everyone

frustration at today's decision

into calm and disciplined protest." There have already been signs of an increased security force presence around some nationalist areas in anticipation of possible protests and street

disturbances By contrast, the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, said the decision marked a new low in the process. He added: "The credibility of the Government is being squandered and if it has any honour left it must feel very soiled to-

Just as Sinn Fein are being sent off the field, the Ulster Democratic party is to be allowed back on from next Monday, following a period of suspension imposed after three killings by its paramilitary associates, the Ulster Defence Association.

The UDP negotiator David Adams said: "We would be seriously concerned at the fact that the governments have seen fit not only to specify a date for Sinn Fein, which they failed to do for us, but also that that date means that in fact Sinn Fein's time out of the process is far less than ours.

"This would seem to indidication of double standards for republicans and loyalists."

Dressing up in Venice: Carnival time fills Venice with glorious costumes; this year's theme is Casanova, who died 200 years ago Looking for the party, page 15 Photograph: Brian Harris 'My sacred duty': Annan flies into

Baghdad in final bid to head off war

By Andrew Marshall

KOFI ANNAN flew into Baghdad yesterday in a last-ditch effort to head off a war with Iraq. The UN Secretary-General said he had a "sacred duty" to try to defuse Iraq's stand-off with the United Nations.

His task is far from simple: he must persuade Iraq to give UN weapons inspectors enough freedom to satisfy the US and the UN, something the UN has failed to do so far. The US and Britain will be on their guard for any effort to prolong the diplomatic proceedings merely in order to head off air

cate that the two governments seem to value some lives more than others, and is a clear in-

Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sabaf. "I hope I will leave Baghdad with a package that will be acceptable to all ... I'm reasonably optimistic that we will find a peaceful solution." Annan told reporters. Aziz added: "Iraq wants a balanced and fair solution ... that preserves the sovereignty, dignity and national security of Iraq as well as the implementation of

> U.N. resolutions." Mr Annan will begin talks with Mr Aziz this morning; an appointment with Saddam Hussein will be arranged if this goes well. Mr Annan has said he expects to spend no more than two days in Baghdad before returning to New York.

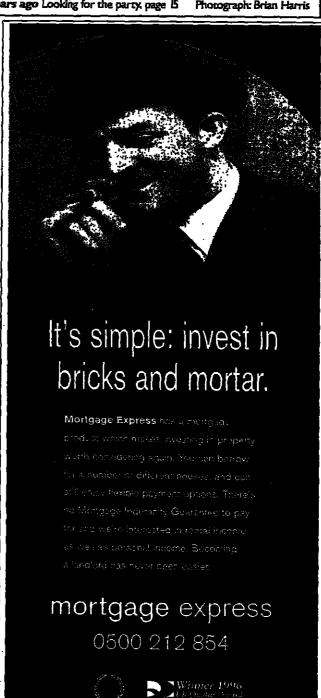
Mr Annan was met at Baghdad's Saddam International President Bill Clinton put the onus for an end to the dis-Airport by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign pute firmly on Saddam yester-

day in a televised message to six months, though Iraq says it Arab nations. He said Washington had "no quarrel with the Iraqi people, who are heirs to a proud civilisation and who have suffered for so many years under Saddam's rule." He added: "If force proves necessary to resolve this crisis, we will do everything we can to prevent innocent people from getting hurt. But make no mistake about it, Saddam must bear full responsibility for every casual-

ty that results." As Mr Annan flew in, the United Nations approved a new plan that would allow Iraq to double the amount of oil it can sell on world markets to buy food and medicine. The Security Council agreed to increase from \$2.1bn to \$5.2bn the

cannot produce this amount. The timing of the vote was clearly meant as a boost to the Secretary-General's prospects when he meets Saddam Hussein. "This is an excellent outcome today," Sir John Weston, Britain's UN representative said. "It's a very good decision to be announcing at [this] point."

But the background to the visit is not encouraging. The US and Britain have assembled a massive fleet in the Gulf, and anger at their presence is growing. Protests erupted yesterday in Amman in Jordan, where at least one protester was killed and Turkish police clashed with hundreds of Islamists demonstrating after Friday prayers in amount of oil Iraq can sell every central ist-nbul.



#### Top jockey admitted throwing race, says television commentator



Kieran Fallon: told court that TV man was lying

Champion jockey Kieran Fallon was accused yesterday in the High Court of admitting throwing a race. It was alleged that Mr Fallon had told a television racing presenter that he had "pulled" the horse on instructions from its trainer. The claim was made during Mr Fallon's lihel case against the Sporting Life racing paper.

Channel 4's Derek Thompson said, under subpoena by the Sporting Life, that Mr Fallon had confessed to not riding Top

Cees to win in the Swaffham handicap, when the two had discussed the race at The Old Plough pub near Newmarket.

He told Mr Justice Morland and the jury: "I don't want to repeat this, which is why I've tried to stop it coming to open court because it was said to me in confidence. I was asking: What happened with Top Cees this afternoon as I thought he would win' and Kieran's words were 'Yes, I thought the horse would win as well but when I got into the paddock lack told me

to the witness box yesterday to denounce the claim as "a lie". Something like that to be

said ... it would be terrible for any jockey to even think about something like that, to talk about stopping the horse, let alone doing it, would be to jeopardise your career. Mr Thompson is inventing it - he's a liar." He said neither the horse's trainer, Lynda Ramsden, nor her husband, Jack, had ever asked him to stop a horse.

Cross-examined by Richard Hartley QC, for the Sporting ately not trying to win the

But Mr Fallon was recalled Life, Mr Fallon denied that his Swaffham. Publishers MGN orders that day had been not to Ltd, part owners of The Indewin. Mr Hartley said: "But if the governor tells you not to win, I suggest that you, as the jockey on that occasion, would follow orders." Mr Fallon countered: "You think I would risk my li-

> cence in order to stop a horse?" The Ramsdens and Mr Falion are suing over a "savage verbal onslaught", in an unsigned editorial in May 1995, the day after Top Cees won the Chester Cup. It said they conspired to deceive the public by deliber

pendent, deny libel. They say the article is justified and fair comment on a "scandal" that was a matter of public interest. The hearing was adjourned

until Monday. Further reports, Sport



ri 20/2/98 and 30/4/98. Full ter

INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 • CROSSWORDS, TIME OFF P14 AND P26 • TODAY'S TELEVISION, THE EYE • FULL CONTENTS, P2

## Men in sex parties case escape jail sentences

By Kathy Marks

SEVEN men who became the focus of an international campaign after they were prose-Crown Court.

Judge Michael Lever, QC, had warned that he might jail at least some of the so-called guilty of buggery and gross inecency at a trial last month.

But after more than three hours of defence submissions in sex parties escaped prison sen- men, and probation and comtences yesterday at Bolton munity service orders to the rest.

> ceived letters of support from two bishops and from human rights groups around the world,

had recorded the parties for

Under the 1967 Sexual Ofmitigation, the judge handed out fences Act, sex between men is cuted for taking part in private suspended sentences to two of the illegal if more than two people are present. The men faced prison sentences of up to five years, and The defendants, who had re- Amnesty International planned to adopt them as prisoners of conscience if they were jailed.

Gay campaigners have con-

Bolton Seven, who were found were prosecuted after police demned the law as discriminaseized video tapes on which they tory, in that it penalises private sexual behaviour between consenting adults. All the Bolton men were over the age of consent, except one who was just under 18, and all were willing participants.

Outside court yesterday, the men issued a statement in which they condemned the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service to pursue the case.

the trial has had a ruinous effect on our lives," they said, adding that the "cruel resuscitation" of an obscure section of the Act showed "callous insensitivity.

"One of the positive consequences of this bitter experience is that a new sense of outrage and urgency has been injected into the law reform movement, and the demand for a comprehensive review of our sex laws

"Regardless of the sentence, may well now become irresistible," the men said.

Before passing sentence, the judge referred to numerous letters that he had received asking him to show elemency. He said he accepted that Terry Connell, 55, the oldest defendant, was "a perfectly respectable and decent man" who had "led an exemplary life".

Ben Emmerson, a defence barrister, argued in mitigation

that the prosecutions were a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and that, although the Convention had not yet been incorporated into English law, the judge was

obliged to take account of it. Mr Emmerson also said publicity about the trial had led to several of the men being assaulted and to firebomb attacks on their homes.

Sources close to the case say

the house of one defendant, Norman Williams, in the mistaken belief that he was part of a paedophile ring. It has emerged that Barbara

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Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, endorsed the decision to prosecute the men. In a letter to Brian Iddon, MP for Bolton South-East, Dame Barbara said the prosecution was in the public interest.

#### Goodbye to the Metro, the car we never quite fell in love with

By Rosa Prince

It was supposed to be the Mini for the 1980s, a nippy little run around that would rescue the British motoring industry from the onslaught of the Japanese

Eighteen years on, the last Metro trundled off the production line yesterday, outclassed and outsold by snappier models with snappier names; Polo, Clio and Micra.

At its death the Metro wasn't even British any more, having come under the ownership of the Bavarian uberfirm BMW when Rover was sold to the Germans. It will be replaced by a new Mini, to be built jointly by Rover and

The Metro started life as in October 1980 as the Austin Mini Metro. It was initially the saviour of British Levland, which before the car's introduction hadn't manufactured a big seller for years. But had a chequered career. suffering from a lack of funding. After each attempt at revamp and relaunch it would rocket to occupy top spot in its class, the most super of the super minis, but plummet swiftly as it failed to keep up with the competition.

The high point of the Metro's journey came early on when its picture went around the world, carrying the then cameras during her engagement to Prince Charles.

Falling sales and sneers from other drivers dented the little car's image, but by far its lowest moment was unconnected to manufacturing prob-

The Metro attracted infamy and humiliation for its owners when, in 1994. it was revealed as the sexual partner



Lady Diana Spencer away from the of choice for a disturbed 20-year-old man, who was treated for his fetish at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. The Metro's biggest fan said he found it particularly arousing when the car's

exhaust pipe belched fumes. Despite this, the car enjoyed periods of more conventional popularity, its sales pushing past the two million

It was even voted Best Small Car

in the World by Autocar and Motor af- drivers complained it whined at speeds week. It was signed by all of the 1,200 ter its 1990 relaunch. The trouble was over 45 miles per hour. that even the redesigned car began to look outdated as it failed to keep up

with its competitors. Often derided for its cramped interior, and, some said, unattractive look, the original Metro had an engine dating back to the Morris Minor technology of the 1950s. Despite being branded "the car to beat the world,"

Still, that didn't stop its manufacturers from trying to add some sales with a little badge engineering - the Metro in 1990 and eventually became the Rover 100 in 1994.

The last Rover 100, in a striking silver finish, was waved off from Rover's ferent trim levels. Prices range from Longbridge plant in Birmingham last £6,500 to £10,000. A bargain.

people who worked on it and handed over to the Heritage Centre Motor

Museum in Gaydon, Warwickshire. Although production has stopped, hatchback was renamed the Rover a last batch of cars, no doubt future classics, are still available. They come in three and five door models, 1.1 or 1.4 litre K series engines and five dif-

#### MONDAY

IN THE INDEPENDENT

#### **DEBORAH ROSS**

meets Mickey, Goofy and big fan at Eurodisney

#### THE EYE

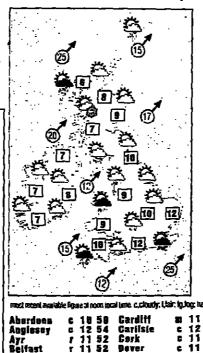
Mardi Gras: why don't we have any fun?

Heard the one about the Japanese comic? Actually, he's quite funny

How a television series survives when the star quits

#### **CONTENTS** Foreign 23-25 Time Off, 16-26 Arts Sport Leader & letters Crosswords Time Off, 14, 26 Comment TV & radio The Eye





WEATHER

General summary and outlook: Overnight rain will soon clear eastern parts, then it; will be a fresher day than of late everywhere with amix of sunshine and showers. Only a lew locations: in eastern Scotland and north-east England are likely to escape dry, and it is here that the best of the days sunshine can be expected. The showers: will be frequent in the west throughout the day, with sleet in the north and snow on the peaks. Some of the afternoon showers will be rather sharp and slow

Sunday will be mainly dry with sunny breaks although a few showers will occur in the west. It will turn milder by Monday with rain and strong winds in the north, but elsewhere will be mainly dry. The mild spell of weather will continue through Tuesday and Wednesday, with some further rain in the lar north and a little drizzle possible in the west. However, the east and south will be mainly dry with

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New astle .....17.25

AA Roadwatch London, A1 between Mill Hill Circus and Fiveways Corner. Roadworks and restrictions. Until May 31. London A3211 Blackfriars Underpass. Contraffow. (Intil April 15 Buckinghamshue, M40 J1a-J3 Roadworks and contrallow Until 1999.

Kera M2 J5-7. Bridge mainlenance & resinc-tions. Until March 9

Bristol, M5 J18j-19 Major roadworks on Avon-

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West Yorks, M1 J43-42 Slourion to Lothouse are in place. Urthi July 13 Comwall, A38 Bodmin Parloray Station turning Contraftow Until June 1 Somersel, M5 J22-J23. Major roadworks & contrallow. Until March 31 Cambs, A1 Alconbury to Haddon Construcflow work. Until December 31 1938 Suitolk A12 between Kessingland and Wien-tham Restrictions until March 3

Newcastle .....17,27

Destyshire, A38 South Normanton Major readworks Until March 1. Leicestershire M1 J24 Northbou closed Use J23a, Until April 13 Merseyside A57 Knowstey Roadworks at M57 Junction Until Dec 31 1998 North Yorks, A1 Aberlard to Garlorth Roadworks until August 1

Out and about with AA Roadwatch car G336 401 to the lass local and reform traffic access Source The Automotive and Access to the cocation Calls charged at 39p per min (cheap rate) 49p per min (air

Atlantic chart, noon today

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Sun and moon





Tycoon shrugs off the flak as he takes a battering from his critics. Michael Harrison reports

HAS the halo finally begun to she This weekend the man who was once ranked second only to Mother Teresa as a role model for the young is looking dis-tinctly less saintly. The man is, tinctly less samely. The man of course, Richard Branson, boss of the Virgin empire, and this has not been one of his better weeks.

It began with a demolition job by the BBC Panorama programme on the performance of his West Coast train franchise. It ended with a double-barrelled assault from The Speciator and The Economist, both of which chose to make Mr Branson the subject of less-than-flattering coverstories.

The Spectator's was a piece of ill-tempered polemic charting how Mr Branson has risen to the top on a tide of litigation, news management and self-promotion. The Economist contained a more sober but telling assessment of the financial vuinerability of the Virgin companies and the way in which their true ownership is disguised by a web of offshore trusts.

Little of the information presented was that groundbreaking: Virgin has encountered such flak before and sailed through unscathed to stamp the brand on everything from air travel, bridal wear and a radio station to cola, vodka, personal pensions and cinemas.

Lit the combination of the twin attacks was enough to wipe the smile off that famously bearded face for once. Speaking vesterday from his chalet in the Swiss ski resort of Zermatt, Mr Branson was not amused by the bad publicity, but accepted it might be partly his own fault. "We have been away for the week so we haven't been able of the Camelot member GTech to firefight properly," he reflected. "It could all be just a co- to Virgin's lingering ambitions to

Kewlogic Ltd Includes: Ginge Virgia Cinem Group Ltd Andra Express Hold Includes: Virgin Tax Free Shop Group Ltd Virgia Retail Group Lid Trains Ltd and Includes: Virgin Retail Europe and Blockbuste Ykrgin Yoyager Lid Yagin Travel nctudes: Virgin Atlanti

the things that came out of the court case was just how much money PR companies are being paid to keep an eye on Virgin. We have a lot of competitors and a lot of enemies out there."

The court case Mr Branson is referring to is his spectacular libel victory over Guy Snowden -a victory that has done no harm

But the libel win has since been overshadowed by a string of setbacks. Virgin has bought out its partner in the Virgin Cola venture, Cott of Canada, after disappointing sales and the failure of the brand to grab more than a negligible market share.

Virgin Vodka has also performed miserably and is now on sale only in a handful of dutyfree shops and on Virgin Atincidence of course, but one of take over the National Lottery. lantic flights. Then came the

collapse of the consortium selected to build the £5bn Channel Tunnel rail link, London & Continental Railways, in which Virgin has a 17 per cent stake.

To critics of the Virgin empire, this run of bad luck has crystallised everything that is wrong with the Branson formula. First, that the brand, Virgin's most important and, arguably, its only real asset, will be devalued through association

with failure. Second, that the Virgin strategy of expanding through joint ventures, while a cute way of getting others to underwrite the investment needed for new businesses, also denies Virgin real management control. And third, that Mr Branson is now taking on businesses that have an insatiable appetite for cash, like railways.

According to The Economist's analysis of the accounts

of Mr Branson's 40 most important companies, the Virgin empire is barely profitable. It calculates that the Virgin Travel group is making profits of £67.5m on turnover of £886m, mainly due to the contribution of the airline. But it says that six other main Virgin Group companies lost £27.8m on sales of £384m while a further eight companies, in which Virgin has

less than a 50 per cent stake, in-

cluding its two rail franchises, lost £37.5m, of which Virgin's share is £15.4m.

That said, it is all but impossible to grasp the full financial picture at Virgin because its myriad businesses are not held together in a consolidated group but are owned through a Byzantine structure of offshore trusts in the Channel Isles and British Virgin Islands.

Mr Branson did briefly ex-

periment with a public listing, turning his empire, minus the airline, into a quoted company in 1986. But he took the business private again two years later, tiring in part at the disclosure requirements that come with a public quote.

Mr Branson describes the Economist article as "not unfair" but he insists it paints an unduly gloomy picture. "We are in the strongest position we have ever been in. Our businesses are generating £150m of cash a year and almost every new venture we are involved in has strong outside partners to finance it."

The biggest of these is Virgin Trains, the holding company for the West Coast and Cross Country franchises. And if that business goes bad it could bring down the whole pack of cards.

Over the 15-year life of the franchise, Virgin has to make royalty payments to the government of £1.24bn at the same time as funding a £1bn fleet of high-speed tilting trains. It also has to double passenger num-bers to make consistent profits.

Funding is intended to come from a market flotation of Virgin Trains this summer. But passenger complaints are running at higher levels some months than in the days of BR and some of the rolling stock is so decrepit that Virgin has not repainted it in its familiar red and white livery. Worse, the disruption caused by Railtrack's £21bn modernisation of the line is likely to mean a further deterioration in the service until early next century.

Mr Branson insists the flotation remains on course and blames the complaints on the heightened public expectations engendered when Virgin took over. But sceptics wonder how the business can possibly be floated against such a backdrop.

The Virgin chairman has been in a similar hole before. In 1992 he raised £510m from the sale of the Virgin music publishing business to EMI in order to shore up the other parts of his empire.

The question now is whether he will have to part company with Virgin Atlantic - valued at between £500m and £800m - to finance his railway ambitions.

## **Hutchence died 'bankrupt'**

PAULA YATES could get nothing from the estate of Michael Hutchence because he disguised the ownership of his £20m fortune to avoid paying tax and was technically bankrupt when he died, it was alleged yesterday.

An investigation by the Australian newspaper, the Sydney Morning Herald, claimed that the INXS rock star used an elaborate network of trust companies to hide the ownership of his assets. As a result, his lover Ms Yates and the couple's daughter Tiger Lily could end up without

Decuments were distributed to beneficiaries of the estate this week by lawyers in Hong Kong. They showed that apart from minor property investments and insurance policies, the singer - who committed suicide in a Sydney hotel room in November owned very little.

Missing from the estate, said the newspaper, are his investment properties on Australia's Gold Coast, his French villa and



Hutchence: bankrupt when he died?

London home, plus publishing and sales

(nearly £500,000) against known liabilities totalling just under a quarter of that

But the singer also gave a personal guarantee to cover the costs of Paula Yates's legal battle with her former husband Bob Geldof, which could total millions.

The alarm was first raised over the estate when Hutchence's mother Patricia Glassop and his sister Tina were told the singer did not actually own a luxury waterfront house at the resort of Surfer's Par-

adise, which he had told them was his. That and two other Australian properties are held by a complex network of trusts, as is his villa in the South of France.

Barrister Colin Thomas Diamond, who legally controls Hutchence's assets, is said by the newspaper to have established an intricate web of trusts and holding companies throughout the world.

The documents distributed by lawyers this week also showed that at his London home he owned only personal effects.

Paula Yates's solicitor, Anthony Burton, said yesterday that he was unaware of the The total assets from his estate amount report. "I have absolutely no comment to to just 1.2 million Australian dollars make about Michael's estate," he said.

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#### Orchestras are told to double Dutch

By Abi Daruvalla in Amsterdam

CORDANT noises are string from Holland's or-thestras following the introduction of a government quota system to promote Dutch classical music.

Amsterdam's prestigious Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is now conducting legal action against the culture ministry's move, claiming it violates their freedom of expression and contravenes EU anti-discrimination regulations.

The row is over a ruling compelling Dutch orchestras to devote at least 7 per cent of performing time to the work of Dutch composers, 3 per cent of whom must be living comers. Orchestras which do not meet this requirement by April will lose part of their state subsidy which accounts for around 75 per cent of most orchestras' funding and totals 150m

THREE FAMOUS DUTCH COMPOSERS YOU MAY NOT HAVE HEARD OF

Theo Louvendie; Peter Schat, Louis Andriessen

guilders (£45m) annually. Elly Koning, the Concertgebouw Orchestra's lawyer, describes the quota system as "ridiculous" referring in particular to its definition of Dutch composers which she claims can be stretched to include such "Dutch" maestros as Bach,

"The ministry says composers can be considered Dutch if they are Dutch nationals, live in the Netherlands or have made a longterm and significant contribution to Dutch music. There is a case to be made that these famous names have fulfilled the latter condition," said Ms Koning

The Association of Dutch Orchestras - the country has 15 - is backing the court case. "Of course we must promote Dutch music but culture state secretary Ad Nuis is making it an obligation rather than something exciting and thrilling. What we need is a policy of promotion not punishment," said its Di-Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert

rector Rudolph Wolfensberger. He says too that a quota system will not work because orchestras will always find ways to get around it. "In Belgium if an orchestra wanted extra state funding for a foreign tour, it had to include a Belgian composition in its programme. This gave Marcel Poot a brilliant ca- but hopefully it will be an inreer — orchestras always chose

his work because it was just five minutes lone." But the Dutch Composers Society, which has around 200

members, backs the government's policy. Board member Andre Douw who is also coordinator of the composition department at Amsterdam's prestigious Sweelink Conservatory, insisted the measure was necessary: "It's a drastic solution but something has to be done because this problem has been playing for a long time and the orchestras refused to take action voluntarily.

Some Dutch composers like Theo Louvendie, Louis Andriessen and Peter Schat are well-known contemporary classical composers but newcomers like Theo Verbey need the opportunity to have their work heard. Some composers are insulted that such a policy is necessary and I can understand that

## Conspiracies abound as Cole quits 'toughest job in PR'

Was he pushed, or did he fall? Steve Boggan examines the career of the man who fronted for Mohamed Al Fayed

Michael Cole, the bouffanthaired front-man for Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed. stepped down yesterday, sparking the kind of conspiracy theories he had fostered under his master since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and Dodi Fayed. "Did he fall or was he pushed?" was the question being bounced around media circles after the world's most famous department store unexpectedly announced his retirement at the age of 55.

Harrods and Mr Cole, a former BBC Royal Correspondent, issued a joint statement which said the departure was amicable and mutual. But the subsequent unavailability of Mr Cole fanned the flames of speculation. Not only had the announcement been timed to coincide with a Cole family holiday at a secret location, but his home and mobile telephone numbers also went dead. It was an abrupt end to a morbidly momentous year for Mr Cole, who joined Harrods as director of public affairs in 1988 after 27 years as a journalist.

He had borne a huge responsibility in the weeks after Some would argue the role was made more difficult because it involved repeating Mr Fayed's insistence that Henri Paul, driver of the car in which the princess and Mr Fayed's son died, had not been drinking excessively. A post-mortem examination showed he was over the limit and had been taking prescription drugs.

More recently, Mr Fayed's aims that the couple were murdered and that he was told the Egyptian's ire at not being of Diana's "last words" - words which doctors said were never uttered - may have sat awkwardly with Mr Cole's instincts

as a former journalist. During his time with Mr Fayed, Mr Cole projected the smooth, sophisticated face of



Harrods. Those who have met Mr Fayed know that he is prone to lapse into expletives and raucous anecdotes. During interviews it was not unusual for Mr Cole to interrupt, reminding the diminutive Egyptian that he hadn't meant to say one thing but had really intended to say another. His firefighting exploits on behalf of Mr Fayed involved projecting the Egyptian's argument in his fight over Harrods with arch-enemy Tiny Rowland during the 1980s. They included denying a Department of Trade and Industry report which branded Mr Fayed a liar.

On the battle went throughthe 1990s, Mr Cole voicing

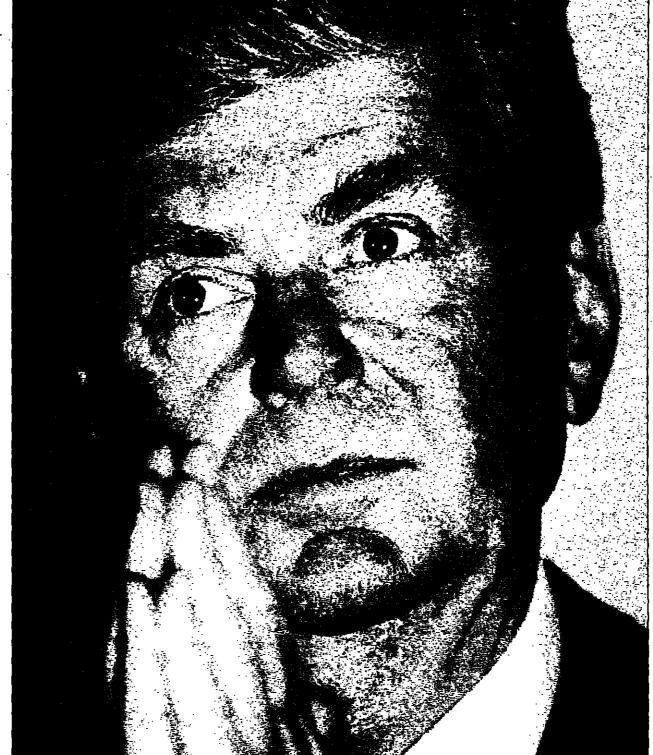
Then came the fight against the establishment; paying Tory MPs to ask questions and then ex-

Guardian's battle against Jonathan Aitken, former arms procurement minister, and his denials - shown in court to have been lies - that he was entertained at Mr Fayed's Ritz Hotel by Saudi arms dealers. Mr Cole began his career in newspapers before moving into independent television and the BBC. He left 20 years later after telling a number of tabloid reporters details of a secret viewing of the Queen's Christmas speech.

The disclosure was not an unprofessional one - it was the sort of confidence shared by specialist journalists all the time. But the confidence was not kept and the details were splashed over the papers the following day. His position became untenable, but few believed he would leave journalism for ever.

He was not universally popular with those who had to deal with him. He dished out information like favours and was known for his tendency to be smooth to the point of obse-

Mr Fayed, even when the Egyptian's treatment of him appeared to observers to be less than respectful. Once, an Independent on Sunday journalist was critical of the store after being shown around by Mr Cole. During the visit, the journalist was asked by Mr Fayed if he had



Michael Cole, taking early retirement after hectic years representing the Harrods boss

And he was slavishly loyal to children. When he replied 'yes', given to the child and, with the ed diamonds from business-Mr Fayed ordered Mr Cole to permission of The Indepenfetch a small teddy bear and a dent's editor, it was retained. For believed Mr Fayed knew the coffee table book on The Ritz hotel for the journalist.

When the critical article appeared, Mr Cole wrote to the newspaper asking for the gifts but the bear had already been

several weeks, Mr Cole wrote at the behest of Mr Fayed ask-

ing for the teddy bear back. On another occasion, a colleague and I visited Mr Fayed back. The book was returned as part of efforts to prove that a former minister had accept-

men for services rendered. We woman buying the diamonds from the MP and asked him to

make a phone call to her. But he could stay on the subject for only a few minutes. Very quickly the conversation moved on to a friend of the woman's.

"You tell ber," said Mr Fayed, "that Mohamed wants to fuck

Photograph: Robin Mayes

her. But tell her she must be a virgin. Mohamed only fucks virgins." Mr Cole, presumably wondering why he ever took the job, waved his arms in front of the Egyptian tycoon, who chuckled and carried on re- I many others.

#### **Battle** under way to block toll road

LOCAL OBJECTORS yesterday won the right to mount a High Court challenge over the planned construction of the United Kingdom's first privately owned toll road.

The Alliance Against the Birmingham Northern Rélief Road was granted leave to seek a judicial review, and Mr Justice Ognall ordered an urgent hearing of the case.

The campaign group Friends of the Earth, which is supporting the challenge, said that the alliance, representing communities along the 27-mile route of the proposed road, were demanding to see a concession agreement between the Department of Transport and Midland Expressway to check whether it contained cancellation charges.

Legal opinion from solicators Leigh, Day and Co was that it was unlawful to consider cancellation charges when approving a road scheme; to sign a concession agreement containing cancellation charges before a scheme was approved; and to refuse to make public a concession agreement affecting the environment.

FoE said that, before the general election, Labour promised it would not build the road because noise and air pollution would harm the health and amenities of residents. But soon after the party came to power, the road was given the go-ahead.

Gerald Kells, of West Midlands FoE, said: "The Government has already broken its promise not to build this 2 ad. Now it appears to be preventing people from having access to the facts behind it. If the Government has nothing to hide, then it should come clean and

produce the documents." FoE says the road will cut a huge swath through the West Midlands green belt and cross two protected nature sites, destroy scores of homes and blight

## **PRODUCT** RECALL



Following the Findus Minced Beef Crispy Pancake Product Recall earlier this week, Findus is now recalling all Findus Crispy Pancakes and Crepes with Best Before End Dates of JUL 99 and AUG 99 as a precautionary measure. This is due to finding small cubic pieces of glass in a second variety of Crispy Pancakes. We emphasise that Findus is taking this precaution in the interests of customer safety.

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#### Makers of faulty hip to pay for surgery

By Kate Watson-Smyth

The manufacturers of the artificial hip at the centre of a na- will be contacted by the hospitionwide health scare yesterday tal where they had the surgery offered to pay for "lifelong folwho have been issued with the

Following a meeting with 3M ly monitored. Health Care, the makers of the faulty hip joint, and Val Gooding, managing director of BUPA, the Department of Health confirmed that 3M started to trace patients. would meet the entire costs of "identifying and reviewing" all the names of the 264 people patients who were fitted with the who received this particular 3M Capital implant and any revision operations required.

carried out either in a BUPA ray. We anticipate that it will hospital or an NHS hospital if take two to three weeks to the patient prefers," said a cross-check all the medical statement from the Department of Health.

"The company commitment also extends to life-long follow- in Loughborough, could face a up of patients implanted with total bill of £23m if all 4.700 pathis device."

Earlier, the Government costing £5,000 a time. published a list of hospitals and NHS orthopaedic centres March 1997 when the device operation.

was discontinued. All implants are thought to have been used. Patients fitted with the joints

and will be invited to have Xlow-up" treatment of all patients rays. Some people will need to have the prosthesis replaced and others will need to be careful-

Robin Turner, consultant manager for orthopaedics at Brighton Health Care NHS Trust, said they had already

"When we have established hip joint we will arrange for them to return to the hospital "These operations may be for a clinical check-up and Xrecords to identify the patients

concerned." 3M Health Care Ltd, based tients need a revision operation

The warning about the hip who were supplied with the was issued after studies from hip joints. More than 80 private three hospitals revealed that up to 21 per cent of these implants were supplied with a total of failed within five years com-4,700 3M Capital implants be-pared with the national average tween 1 August 1991 and 31 of 10 per cent 10 years after the

#### WORST AFFECTED HOSPITALS

Hospitals with 50 or more recorded implants: England: Lancaster Moor Hospital (Garnett Clinic) St Mary's Hospital, Newport, Isle of Wight Royal Oldham Hospital. Oldham Southampson General Hospital (Pharm Stores), Southar Royal Sussex Councy Hospital, Brighton Princess Margares Hospital, Swindon Royal Lancaster Infirmary, Lancaster Inster General Ho Bassetlaw District General Hospital, Workson Scarborough General Hospital Westmoreland County Hospital, Kendal Lancaster and Lakeland Nuffield Princess Alexandra, Wroughton, Swindo Harlow Wood Orthopsedic Hospital, Mansfield Sussex Nuffield Hospital, Brighton Devonshire Royal Hospital, Buccon BUPA Chalcybeate Hospital, Southan Royal Halifax Infirmary Conquest Hospital, St Leonards on Sea Duchess of Kent Military Hospital, Catterick Garri Wales: East Glamorgan Hospital, Pontypridd Gwynedd Hospital, Bangor etween 50 and 60 implants mostly at Gartnavel Hospital, Glass

#### Jury unable to reach verdict in Docklands bomb case

A man accused of the Docklands bombing which ended the IRA's 18-month ceasefire and killed two people will have a retrial after a jury at the Old Bailey was unable to agree on werdicts yesterday, writes Jason Bennetto.

The jury of seven men and four women was discharged after they sent a note to the judge saying: "The jury is unable to reach a unanimous or majority verdict and we feel we have exhausted all possible avenues." This followed deliberation of more than nine hours over two days after a five week trial. The judge, Mr Justice Blofeld, signalled that a retrial will take place.

James McCardle, 29, had been accused of planting the giant lorry bomb at South Quay, east London, that exploded on 9 February 1996 killing two people. Mr McCardle from Crossmaglen, denies two charges of murder and conspiracy to cause explosions between 30 October 1995 and 10 February 1996.

#### Ear prints trap burglar

AN OVER-CAREFUL burglar, who made legal history after he was fingered by police for leaving his ear prints at the some of his crimes, was jailed for a year yesterday. Calvin Sewell, ..., always listened carefully to make sure no one was around before breaking in. But pressing the vital organs against doors and windows in 13 different places proved to be a fatal mistake, and made the thief the first criminal in Britain to have a mould taken of his ear by police. An expert in facial mapping then came up with a perfect match, Southwark Crown Court in London heard. The investigating police officer plans to urge colleagues to be on the lookout for tell-tale ear prints during future investigations.

#### **Cut-price tickets for Dome**

Cut-price tickets are to be offered for entry to the Millennium Dome and local residents in the borough of Greenwich, south-east London, could get free entrance under plans to be announced next week by Peter Mandelson, the minister responsible for the project, writes Colin Brown

Mr Mandelson, who will appear on the BBC's Breakfast with Frost from the Dome tomorrow, is due to announce details on Tuesday of the plans for exhibitions inside the Dome, including an androgenous human figure as high as Nelson's column and taller than the Statue of Liberty.

#### Warrant for singer Morrison

A WARRANT was yesterday issued for the arrest of soul singer Mark Morrison after he jumped bail for the seventh time in two months. The 25-year-old failed to turn up at Leicester Crown Court to be sentenced for sending an imposter to carry out Community Service on his behalf. The court was told the singing star - who had a number one hit with "Return of the Mack" was in Barbados for "drug rehabilitation".

It was the third warrant - not backed for bail - to be issued for Leicester born Morrison, who now lives in London.

#### Magnet chief loses court bid

ALAN Bowkett, chief executive of the Berisford group, yesterday failed to win an injunction stopping strikers at Magnet kitchens, the company's subsidiary, demonstrating near his Cambridgeshire mansion. The High Court, however, agreed to hear both sides of the argument next Wednesday.

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## 'So, I'm blind. Why shouldn't I be a BBC television director?'

THE BBC has accepted its first blind man on to a trainee directors' course. Twenty-sevenyear-old Damon Rose beat 350 people to join the Corporation at the beginning of December and his first report will be broadcast on Tuesday.

The training scheme specially for disabled applicants takes two recruits a year and is organised by the BBC's disability programmes unit, which includes 15 disabled people.

They spend their first six months with the unit, but Mr Rose will complete his two-year training in other departments where he will face competition alongside others also wanting placements. Mr Rose, who lives at Sit-

tingbourne in Kent, said yesterday that he had been delighted to get on to the pro- head." duction course. "I was extremely happy that

the people at the unit felt that my sightlessness wasn't a barrier. I knew that I could do it, but it's nice to have that con-

someone who could not see should want to work in televi- BBC's disability programmes and credit sion, particularly when more unit, which was set up seven abled people."

sion than listened to the radio.

"Blind people watch East-Enders and Coronation Street as part of the culture. And it's not would do. iust a visual medium - there is

the age of 13.

"It's obviously proved very useful. I was very, very au fait industry." with television forms," he said. Mr Rose said that if the job of a television director was

ty of the work was carried out in the office. Only when he got to the shooting stage did he rely on the members of the crew to tell him

analysed then the vast majori-

what was in shot. He added: "But the director doesn't do the camera work, thought to be the first blind dithat is the whole point. They direct. I plan the shot in my

Overcoming prejudice was the main problem, he said. "I do things differently, but I'm not ashamed of that. I'm equal but

"I'm happy to be the first blind person doing this. I'd like Mr Rose said that he found to think this coverage might it totally unsurprising that open people's minds a bit."

Ian Macrae, editor of the

blind people "watched" televi- years ago, said Mr Rose's training, including research, television writing and a camera-work course, was what any trainee

Explaining the recruitment policy, Mr Macrae said: "There Mr Rose was a television aren't enough disabled people addict before he lost his sight at on television, and one reason why ... is because there aren't enough disabled people in the

He added: "We aim to

address both these things." Mr Rose's first report, about cars and the visually impaired, will be shown in BBC2's From The Edge magazine programme, billed as made by disabled people about disabled people but for everybody to

watch, on Tuesday.

Although Mr Rose is rector, the BBC correspondent on disability affairs, Peter White, is blind, and Mr Macrae himself is visually impaired.

Richard Lane, of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, said: "I really do think it's brilliant he's doing this. It does shatter the stereotypes. But he is definitely the exception rather than the norm. For [completely] blind people of working age only 17 per cent are working compared to 31 per cent of dis-

## Judge outlaws water company 'smart cards'

Local councils are welcoming a High Court judge's landmark decision yesterday banning water companies from using new electronic "smart" card payment systems to cut off customers who do not pay their

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real the ruing could lead to pre-payment water devices in thousands of homes nationwide having to be removed, or radically changed so that Juseholds cannot be disconnected unlawfully. Today's test case marked a

victory for six local authorities who challenged the legality of the devices, known as budget payment units (BPUs). They cited an "astronomically high and frightening" number of disconnections that posed a threat to public health and increased fire risks.

Mr Justice Harrison declared the BPUs were unlawful because they did not accord with the statutory code of practice for the water industry un-: the 1991 Water Industry Act. They failed to comply with "numerous safeguards" under the code intended to protect from disconnection poor families and vulnerable people who got into difficulties with payments.

Water Services, to compel levels of disconnections by

argued that the new systems ways felt that it was wrong for were lawful because BPU cus- the Director General to allow Unless overturned on ap- tomers were never disconnect- water companies to install these ed by the companies, but disconnected themselves when they failed to pay for their smart card, or key, to be charged with "units of credit". The judge described the argument as "superficially attractive, but, in my view, it is not logically correct".

He agreed that the case raised issues of public importance and gave the Director General leave to appeal to the

Court of Appeal. Today's ruling was won by Manchester, Liverpool and . Birmingham city councils, Lancashire County Council and Tameside and Oldham metropolitan borough councils. Overall, at least 30 local authorities around the country supported the court action.

Oldham's spokeswoman, Councillor John Johnson, said the decision was "a victory for common sense as it is for the good maintenance of public

Birmingham City Council He overturned a refusal by said later its officers had been Ian Byatt, Director General of monitoring "extremely high"

water companies North West devices operated by Severn Water and Severn Trent to Trent Council leader Theresa abandon the pre-payment Stewart said: "Naturally we are very pleased at the High The water companies Court's decision. We have aldevices and disconnect house holds who cannot afford to

"It simply did not take into account the need to respect the current customer safeguards which Parliament put in place, or consider the very real public health risks which would follow widespread installations."

Public service union Unison described the ruling as "very good news, particularly for poor families and customers who have difficulty paying their bills". The union's head of water, Alex Thompson, said: "The real danger with the introduction of smart cards is that they become compulsory for customers who get into debt, leading to whole families being left without water."

The judge's decision will come as a blow to the water industry. It had regarded the introduction of BPUs as a success, and warned it would suffer "substantial financial loss, prejudice and hardship" if the new devices had to be

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## Major investigation into offshore deaths

esterday under way following the deaths of two offshore workers in the North Sea.

Forty-two year-old James Kiloh, from Aberdeen, and Anthony Doherty, 45, from Derby, died after spending around 40 minutes in the water. Mr Kiloh fell overboard on

Thursday afternoon during a routine inspection of the unmanned MCP-01 platform, which is operated by Total and lies around 100 miles North-east of Peterhead.

He then became trapped between the inner core of the platform and the outer breakwater wall as colleagues tried to

ereach him. Mr Doherty, who was on board a fast rescue craft, jumped into the water and climbed through a hole in the recovered from the water when

He managed to grab Mr

Kiloh but lost his grip, and it is thought he may then have detached the lifeline he had fastened to himself.

Both men were recovered from the water after about 40 minutes and flown to hospital in Aberdeen, where they were later pronounced dead. Mr Doherty worked for Vec-

tor Offshore. Mr Kiloh, who was married with an eight-year-old son, Lee, worked for McGregor Energy, and was part of an 18strong maintenance team sent to the platform.

He is thought to have slipped from the walkway during a routine inspection, and fell around 40ft to the water below. Both men were eventually

full-scale investigation was outer wall in an attempt to reach helicopter co-pilot Neil Gordon managed to reach them with the help of a portable ladder. A top-level inquiry into the

tragedy was launched, with Health and Safety Executive officers, police and members of Total's own inspection team due to fly out as soon as weather conditions permitted. Lucien Lallier, managing director of Total Oil Marine, said the company was "shocked and saddened" by the deaths, the first to occur at one of its plat-

forms in recent years. He added that all the companies involved wanted to express their deep sympathy to the bereaved families.

It is thought that conditions inside the concrete breakwater would have been even colder than in the open sea, and that both men suffered hypothermia. **LOWEST EVER PRICE** 



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**3 WAYS TO BUY** 

There's a Great Deal going on

By Judith Judd Education Editor

MUSIC should be the fourth "r" (rhythm) in the curriculum. campaigners told the Government yesterday. All the groups involved in music education published a new booklet on research which shows that learning music improves children's performance in other subjects.

The Campaign for Music in the Curriculum is worried by the Government's decision last month to urge primary schools to concentrate on literacy and numeracy. Supporters fear that music will be squeezed out of ing fewer lessons in those subthe timetable. While the Gov- jects. They also learnt to read ernment is insisting on an hour more easily. Children in the a day each for literacy and nu- extra music classes got on betmeracy, the campaign wants at ter together, researchers sugleast an hour a week for music. gested, because they had to

The pamphlet from the Music Education Council, the Mu-use teamwork. sic Industries Association and the National Music Council, highlights research from Hungary, Switzerland and the United States showing how music improves children's overall acade- connection to music, so that

in Hungary in the Fifties comparing children attending primary schools and those attending special music schools found that the latter were better at memorising and at undenstanding stories and managed their time more efficiently.

An experiment involving 1,200 children in 50 classes in Switzerland in the late Eighties and early Nineties showed that children given three extra music lessons a week instead of other lessons were better at languages and no worse at maths even though they were receivlearn to listen to each other and

Most recently, work at the University of California has suggested that music modifies some that have no obvious

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mic performance. Experiments spatial reasoning, vital in science, is strengthened.

Researchers also found that students who listened to Mozart every day learnt more quickly than those who did not. The pamphlet challenges the view that the association of music with higher academic standards is the result of the social class or the better education of the type of children who learn music.

Experiments in Rhode Island in the United States with inner-city children found that, though they lagged behind in reading and maths at the start of a project in which they were given extra music lessons, by the end, they had caught up in reading and were ahead in maths. The pamphlet argues that

music is for everyone, not just for a talented few. "There is no inherent reason for any child not to learn music as there are no large individual differences in innate musical gifts and talents ... the very wide differences in mucircuits in the brain, including sical accomplishment that exist





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## Threat of revolt in Lords on college fees

By Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

THE "HAUGHTY manner" of Baroness Blackstone was being blamed last night for contributing to the risk of an emthe Lords which could throw into chaos its plan to introduce £1,000-a-year student fees.

Some senior peers were blaming the "arrogance" of the education minister in the Lords, for the Government's difficulties. They are upset that Lady Blackstone has failed to provide assurances about the level of the fees that will be imposed on stu- defeated. The Government's dents by the universities, and the main clauses on fees would practicality of introducing means testing in time for the au-

tumn term. "There is some very bad blood about Baroness Blackstone in the Lords," said one leading House of Lords source. "She has always been bad in the Lords. She has this arrogant, haughty manner. She always looks as though she is looking down her nose at you. She doesn't seem to like it in the Lords. She gives you the impression she would prefer talking to Fellows of All Souls."

The Liberal Democrat peers and the Conservatives led by Baroness Blatch, the former minister, are threatening to join forces to defeat the Government on Monday in the Lords on the Teaching and Higher Education Bill, which puts the plans for student fees into effect. Both opposition parties have

complained that the Government is proposing meanstested fees of £1,000 a year, but charge students."

the legislation fails to spell out the details, because the universities are covered by private law. A motion has been tabled to force the Government to retable the two main clauses at the core of the legislation, with barrassing government defeat in a fuller explanation. That could cause a delay, putting the timetable into fresh doubt. A Liberal Democrat source said: "Unless there is a substantial concession, the Government will be defeated."

A Tory spokesman said: "We are planning to vote with the Liberal Democrats, which means the Government will be have to be tabled bated again."

Baroness Blatch will be leading Tory opposition to the Bill with four key amendments, including one insisting on the existing maintenance grant for students being continued alongside flat-rate fees.

A number of left-wing Labour MPs are also threatening to rebel when the Bill goes to the House of Commons to complete its passage through Parliament. One leading leftwing MP said the rebellion could be as big as the vote against the Government's cuts in one-parent benefits.

The universities are also unhappy with the Government's handling of the introduction of the fees. A Liberal Democrat spokesman said: "Strathelyde University told me all their means testing goes out to an agency. We don't think they will be able to finish it in time. They won't know what to

#### Call for inquiry into mine tragedy

cident at one of Europe's safety at work". He said: largest opencast mines which left one man dead and several seriously injured. The tragedy happened when a dumper truck collided with a personnel carrier which rolled over, trapping 18 miners inside. One man died on the way to

hospital and another five remain seriously ill with chest and spinal injuries. The Transport urging Scottish industry miniswhich happened shortly after burn, in Lanarkshire.

TGWU Scottish Secretary calling on Scottish Coal, which owns the Lanarkshire site, to ensure there are union represen- applied.

Union leaders yesterday called tatives on all its sites "to assist for a public inquiry into an ac- in the whole issue of health and "Health and safety legislation in the opencast industry is less stringent than that in deep mining and ... workers are being asked to work around the clock The coal site at Coalburn is

under franchise from Scottish Coal to Crouch Mining who, for many years, have been anti-trade union. We have tried on several occasions to gain access to the and General Workers Union are site but this has always been denied." Mr Elsby said they would ter Brian Wilson to launch an approach STUC general secreinvestigation into the accident, tary Campbell Christie, who is a director with Mining Scotland, 7pm on Thursday at the parent company of Scottish Dalquhandy Quarry at Coal- Coal, to help the union in lobbying for support. Mr Christie has confirmed he would seek a Jim Elsby said they were also review of arrangements to consider whether health and safety standards were being properly



Lord Irvine, and a spot bother with women

Second lawyer puts Lord Chancellor in the dock over 'old boy network'

FRESH allegations of "old boys' networks" in the judiciary surfaced yesterday as a woman barrister announced that she is suing the Attorney-General for sex discrimination.

The case is likely to cause further embarrassment to Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, who is in charge of the Attorney-General's office. Two week ago, Lord Irvine was himself accused of operating an illegal old boys' network by solicitor Jane Coker, who is also bringing a discrimination case.

Josephine Hayes lodged her complaint against John Morris the Attorney-General, with an industrial tribunal in south London earlier this week. She is suing on the grounds that the Government shows bias in favour of men when appointing lawyers to represent it in civil cas-

Ms Hayes's lawyer, Sara Leslie of Irwin Mitchell in London, said her client is taking action over appointments to four lists of lawyers used to represent the Government.

Ms Leslie says the names on three of the lists are exclusively male. On the fourth there are teria and no application of equal



Lord Irvine: Second case likely to embarrass him after being accused of operating an 'old boys' network'

13 women out of 71 names, but this list is known as the supplementary list and deals with

more routine and minor cases. "What Josephine Hayes claims is that she is an excellent candidate for one of these jobs but has never been given the opportunity to be considered or apply. What we are saying is that there is no objective selection cri-

opportunities," said Ms Leslie. Ms Hayes has a first class law degree from Oxford University and a master's degree from Yale University in America. She is a junior counsel who has been in civil practice for 16 years and is also chairwoman of the

Ms Leslie said the appointment of lawyers to the lists was

Association of Women Barris-

known within the profession as the "secret soundings".

She added: "We understand the Attorney-General makes appointments taking the views of the Treasury Solicitor, government departments, members of the judiciary and senior members of the Bar - what is known as 'secret soundings'.

"Applicants are restricted to barristers these particular people happen to know. The upshot of it is out of 116 barristers acting for the Government in civil proceedings only 13 are women ... a very small proportion of the women in practice where 28 per cent of barristers are women.

"Unless the system is transparent there can be no confidence that gender is not a

criteria for appointments."

She added. "Sex is an issue because the lists are so predominately male."

However, the Attorney General yesterday rejected Ms Hayes's claim. A statement from his office said: "The Attorney General rejects any suggestion of discrimination and will strongly oppose this application."

The tribunal is expected to have a hearing within the next

ing and pillaging of Scottish art

both in the artist and academ-



Jane Coker: Claims discrimination Photograph: Ben Gurr

#### Grace and favours: Lord Chancellor may open refurbished doors to the public

By Colin Brown

Chief Political Correspondent

Public tours of Lord Irvine of versy over the Lord Chancellor's in the capital.

loan of over 80 paintings for the walls of his rooms.

The Prime Minister's spokesman said there were no Lairg's lavish grace and favour plans to charge the public for apartment at the House of touring the Lord Chancellor's Lords could be started in April. rooms, although the continuing Downing Street said yesterday controversy over the £650,000 as the Government fought to refurbishment must make them damp down the latest contro- one of the top tourist attractions

His latest acquisitions of Downing Street as "not of the taken away. They have come paintings from four galleries too rank"

the Royal Academy, the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, the Imperial War Museum, and the National Gallery of Scotland - are like- in expensive wallpaper, has ly to enhance interest in the most controversial interior redesign in London, in spite of the works being dismissed by

The spokesman for Tony

Blaire denied reports that the artwork which will adorn the walls, themselves to be covered been "looted" from Scottish galleries. "One newspaper said the impression they are being

from their reserve collections. In other words, they are all in cellars. They are not on display. None of them is on a wall anywhere. The galleries are extremely happy they will in due course be on display in the Lord Chancellor's residence which is they had been removed; it gave going to be open to the public."

But that failed to impress ry Irvine's house in London is and now he is on the canvas. Is

ic worlds.

everything to do with self ag- Irvine?" leader, Alex Salmond, who said: "Derry Irvine is displaying a grandisement." Francis Maude, the Tory breathtaking arrogance which is entirely in character. His loot-

spokesman on culture, said: "Power has gone to his head. works will cause great anger Not to mention his furniture. It is not surprising his colleagues are getting fed up with it all. He "Taking them down to Der- has already had a carpeting

the Scottish National Party nothing to do with access but it going to be curtains for Lord

The Downing Street spokesman said the Lord Chancellor's department was working out access arrangements with House of Lords authorities, though these might take the form of organised access for groups. However, the intention was to secure

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after sympathy, but would just like to highlight what devastation, if not covered, illness can leave behind.

In 1994 at the age of 31,1 suffered a heart attack (something that I believe is happening more and more to younger people). I was not, regrettably, covered for such an eventuality, being so young.

Being self-employed, I had to get back to work asap. I had a mortgage at mid-term, a wife and

two young children to support. What I received from the state was a pittance. I was compelled to return to work much earlier than we would have liked. Without realising . it, I was pitching myself into a downward spiral that would further affect my health. When I returned to work, I found that just to survive I now had to work longer and harder to cover the debt I'd accumulated during the period of illness. This, I'm afraid, had the eventual effect in May 1997 of a second attack. I've now got over this

second setback and again have returned somewhat prematurely to work. With the overall accumulated debt, we were staring ultimate ruin in the face if I had not done this. Since going back to work, after being back for only one month, I have been signed off sick again with angina (chest pains).

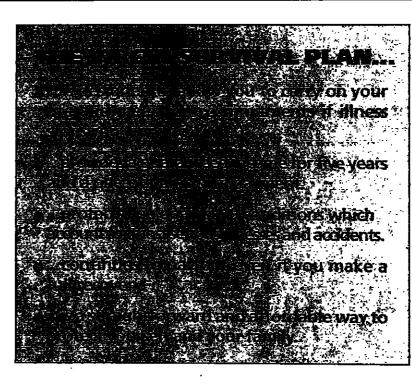
> i can not stress strongly enough how important it is, specially for younger people with mortgages and families, to get this cover, as I feel that with the same hindsight, and five years to get back on my feet, I would without doubt not be in the position that I find myself in today.

I'm not after sympathy, but implore you to hammer home the need for this, so that as few families as possible have to go through this devastating situation.

Yours sincerely,

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#### **WORLDS APART**

By Glenda Cooper Social Affairs Correspondent

Britain has little statutory childcare provision and little help with childcare for mothers. Usually the limited number of public childcare places available are for children deemed to be "at risk".

Comparing Britain with three other countries shows the greater state involvement in caring for children with twofold purposes: to encourage parsalomé 10 sende 12 septembre

ents into employment and to help children to develop.

Only 41 per cent of lone mothers in Britain are employed, compared to 82 per cent

in France, and 70 per cent in In Europe only Germany,

the Netherlands and Ireland urging the Chancellor to invest have lower employment rates.

launched its campaign for a tax higher percentage of the cost of and with 1.1 million women ex-This week The Independent allowance for working mothers, in the nation's children.

Parents in Britain pay a childcare than in virtually any other advanced economy. We by 2006 unless something is feel there are lessons to be done about childcare we face se-

learned from other countries pected to enter the workforce

rious problems. In France childcare is beavily subsidised and there is a long tradition of early childhood education in the public sector. After crèches for 0-three-

year-olds, the state makes universal educational provision for children aged three to schoolentry age at écoles maiernelles. which are provided to help parents in employment but also to help the child develop.

These state-funded institutions are an accepted way of life for children and 35 per cent of three to six-year olds attend.

In recent years, two-yearolds have been admitted and the handful of *écoles maternelles* that are run privately receive state

Alternatively, French families can employ an assistante maternelle, or childminder. They receive financial support in the form of a grant and a payment to cover social security contributions.

For schoolchildren up to 17 years there are recreation centres, Centre de Loisirs sans Hébergement, that provide care from 8am to 6pm or 7pm. These come under the Ministry for Youth and Sport at a local level and are sometimes subsidised by private

companies. seen as a symbol of child-friend- dren by 2002.

French without tears: A writing class across the Channel, where things are much better organised Photograph: Raphael Gaillarde/FSP

ly policies. In Sweden, public funds meet the costs of day care for 72 per cent of three to six-year-olds (compulsory schooling does not start until

Parents are provided with seven). daghem - day-care centres, typically open between 6am and 6.30pm and for those who want to stay at home to look after their children, they qualify for payment by the state of 360 days on 90 per cent of their previous income, plus an additional 90 days on a flat daily rate of SKro0 (about £6).

Other services include Sexursverksamhet, pre-primary schooling for children and Fritidshem, centres providing care and recreation for schoolage children up to 12 years.

The US is one of the countries Britain is watching most closely after President Bill Clinton's State of the Union address

last month. In America the drive to get lone parents off welfare has been run in conjunction with more childcare provision.

The President announced last month that \$20bn will be spent over the next five years on childcare to help working families pay for care, build afterschool programmes and emphasis quality of care through research and monitoring. The number of children receiving childcare subsidies will double to 2 million by the year 2003 and tax credits are also to be increased for three million

A new tax credit will also be offered to businesses that offer childcare services to their employees. After-school care will also be opened up to 500,000 children - at present there are five million latchkey kids in the

Head Start, the scheme for children from a deprived background which has shown good results has also been given Scandinavia has long been more money to reach im chil-

## Why it's easier being a mother in France

#### FRENCH VIEW

By Lucy Reid in Pans

LAURE has just had her first baby. A trainee teacher, aged 24, she is due to return to work in April, when Léa is 12 weeks old. Since her husband is a student and the family relies on her income, she is mapping out her campaign to find a childcare place for her baby.

The French system boasts a wide range of reasonablypriced, pre-school care facilities. The problem - as always in France - is that you have to know the ins and outs of a baffling system. Places are highlyprized and hard to come by. Legend has it that it is harder to find the right place in a creche in France than to get into university.

Laure said: "You need to be organised and start place-hunt- Garderies". Children (from 0-6 ing early on, especially in Paris. I began looking when I was four place in a city creche, but have can have five sessions a week. been told that none is available before September."

Between April and September Léa will go to an "assistante whether a place is available until very late in the day. We are left playing a waiting game."

Working women like Laure have five basic childcare options within the French state system. In Paris, very young children with two working parents can be sent to city creches from the age of 10 weeks. A parent who is unemployed at the time of admission has two-and-a-half months to find a job, after which time the child will be "cxcluded" from the creche.

Payment operates on a sliding scale of £1.10 to £8.90 a day, according to income. While parents.

there is no official means test, parents must submit evidence of their income, as all establishments are required to balance the number of low and high income families. Fees are variable according to how many children attend (the more children you have, the cheaper it is).

The "assistante maternelle agréée libérale " (registered childminder operating in her in own home) is a more expensive possibility, but the most favoured method of childcare in France. Two out of three children under the age of three are looked after by childminders.

Any parent, regardless of income, can claim benefits to cover the cost of the childminder's National Insurance charges, and claim 25 per cent of the childminder's fees (up to £1,500 per child) against tax.

Mothers working only parttime can turn to "Haltesyears) are admitted for three sessions a week (12 hours in tomonths pregnant. We want a tal). Single parents and students

Fourthly, there is the state nursery school (La Maternelle). Admission is from the age of two, on the strict condition maternelle" (child-minder), that the child is potty-trained. which is far more expensive - In practice, priority is given to about £18 a day as opposed to older children, because of a £8 in a creche. "Even then it's shortage of places. Nursery the same thing-we won't know school is free for all, but less well-off families, single-parent families and families with two working parents go to the top of the waiting lists.

Finally, parents wishing to have their child looked after at home can claim the "Aide a la Garde de l'Enfant a Domicile" (Aid for looking after children at home), which the Socialist government cut last year. The AGED, available to two working parents earning less than £30,000,now provides a tax break of up to £3,600 a year per child under three and less for older children and wealthier



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## Lottery firm is given deadline to come clean

By Kate Watson-Smyth

The Camelot shareholders Glech have been given 17 days to prove they are "fit and proper" to be involved in running the National Lottery, it was announced yesterday.

John Stoker, acting regulator of Oflot, said he was satisfied all links between Glech and its disgraced former director Guy Snowden had been severed in the wake of allegations that he tried to bribe Richard Branson, but he said the company still needed to dispel concerns over its ethics and business practices before he could decide whether Camelot should carry on running the lottery.

The company has been given until 9 March to give assurances on the legality of Glech business practices both past and present around the world. Under terms of the National Lottery Act, the licence to run the game can be revoked if any person managing the lottery or benefiting from it "is not a fit

and proper person to do so."

of US-based GTech, resigned nearly three weeks ago after Mr son and others that he did so as Branson was awarded £100,000 the company's alter ego; and in damages over Mr Snowden's continuing concern about some alleged attempt to bribe him of Glech's apparent business into abandoning his attempt to practices in the United States. secure the franchise.

Virgin tycoon was telling the truth when he claimed that Mr Snowden offered the bribe as the two men lunched at Mr Branson's London home in 1993. Following an initial investigation in the wake of the hearing, Mr Stoker, who was appointed acting regulator after Peter Davis's resignation, said he noted that no evidence had been put forward during the hearing that the board of Glech had been involved in the at-

tempted bribe. He added that no GTech officials had been found guilty of furtherance of GTech's inter-

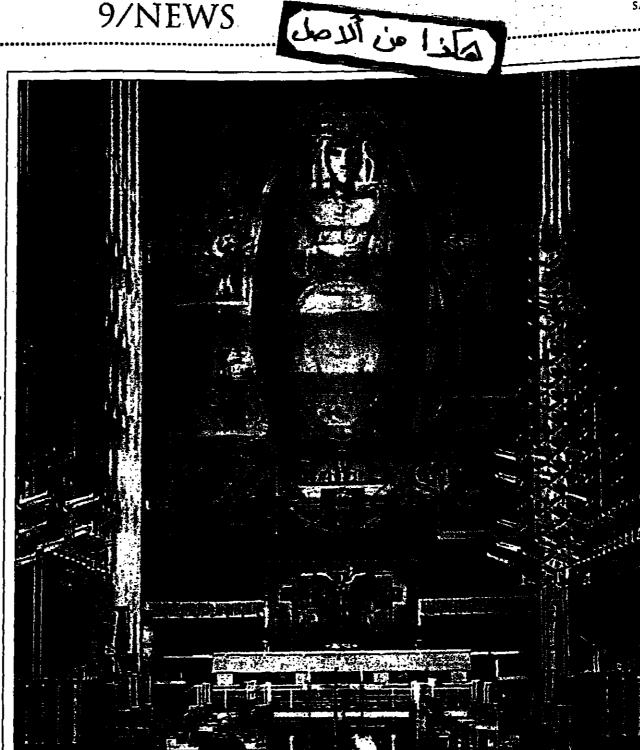
But he said: "I have noted also the gravity of the fact that Mr Snowden, as chairman and Mr Snowden, the then head offered a bribe to Mr Branson: giving Mr Snowden influence

"I have asked the board of The jury accepted that the Glech Holdings Corporation, by March 9 to provide me with evidence in support of their fit-. ness and propriety to be involved in and benefit from the UK National Lottery.

"Having considered their representations ... I will reach my conclusions on whether it would be appropriate for me to take further action under the National Lottery Act 1993."

He added that he was satisfied that Mr Snowden's resignation from the board of Glech and its US parent company, Glech Corporation, had removed him from influence over the UK Lottery. wrongdoing in the US "in the Although Mr Snowden still has a 1 per cent shareholding in GTech, Mr Stoker said this was not grounds enough to revoke Camelot's licence.

But he warned if that sharechief executive of the company, holding were to grow in future,



Colour revival: Coventry Cathedral's tapestry, which has just been cleaned at a cost of £17,000. Graham Sutherland's 74ft by 38ft Christ in Glory, made 36 years ago, is the biggest one-piece tapestry ever produced Photograph: Tom Pilston

#### Courts to accept digital evidence

Pictures and images produced from digital technology can be safely used as evidence in courts, a House of Lords committee said yesterday.

But the Lords select committee on science and technology called for greater control over closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance systems operating in public places.

It also warned that public confidence in CCTV systems would be damaged if images from them were passed too often to television companies for entertainment use.

The Lords inquiry, which took evidence from the Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: "We were pleased to find that digital images, which we initially thought might create difficulties for the courts, do not." But it recommended new measures to authenticate the images.

Chaired by Lord Craig of Radley, the committee also suggested there should be a uniform policy on the control and release of CCTV images from publicly owned surveillance systems. It quoted a case where images of a man attempting to commit suicide were released by Brentwood Council to the BBC, prompting the man to seek a judicial review. The High Court, however, found there had been no breach of the law.

The committee also said it had learned that police authorities might be paid by the media for tapes used in a variety of television programmes.

The human rights organisation Justice welcomed the committee's call for tighter controls. Its senior legal officer, Madeleine Colvin, said: "CCTV is more than a tool for reducing crime. It also provides the ability to watch and record people in public places. It therefore raises important civil liberties issues."

#### Redwood takes to the road

By Colin Brown

Chief Political Correspondent

John Redwood is planning to bounce back after being slapped down by William Hague by spearheading a Tory roadshow on the risks facing Britain over leading Euro-sceptic to take a he will say: "For too long we the single currency.

The shadow trade and inforced to withdraw critical com-

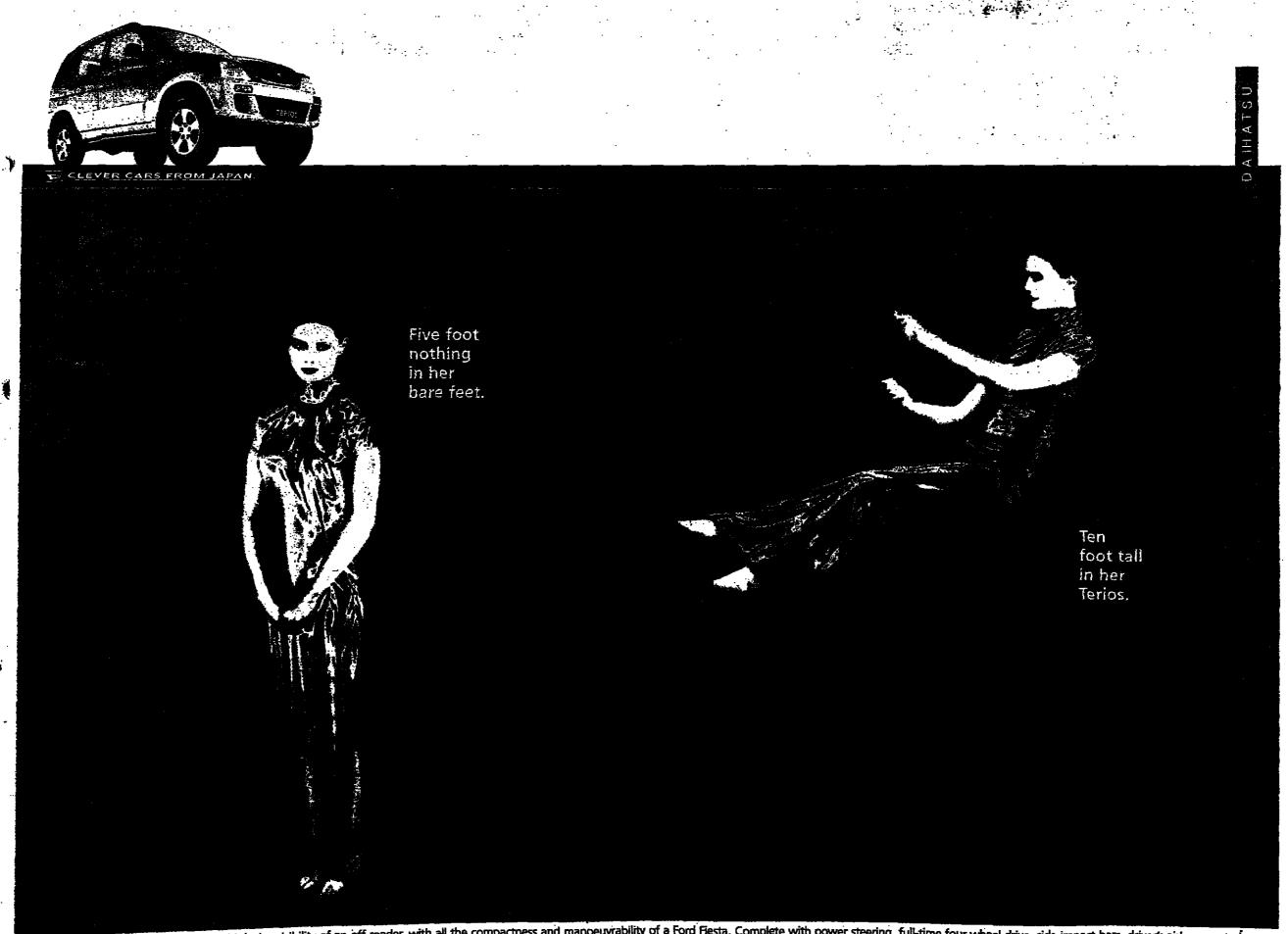
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moth

day in Sunderland. What is cerdates set for Newcastle, Edinburgh, Reading, Birmingham, Manchester and Exeter.

Mr Hague's approval for the tour on the single currency will dismay pro-euro "grandees" of dustry secretary, who was the party led by Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke, ments about the City of London who are holding a pro-Emu much time reorganising local honouring Chancellor Helmut seminar at the Commons next government and not enough Kohl, will begin a tour on Mon- month with business leaders.

Mr Hague today will tell tain to be dubbed the Redwood Tory councillors at a conference Euro-sceptic roadshow has in London that he is seeking a change of culture in the party in favour of local government. Criticising his predecessors, Lady Thatcher and John Major, treated local government, local government elections and local councillors as though they didn't matter. We spent too time campaigning for it."



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#### Duke's wedding cake goes for £17,000

sessions of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were attracting fevered interest at as table on which the Duke, sales continued at Sotheby's then Edward VIII, signed his in New York yesterday.

frenzy descended into the love" - Wallis Simpson. ridiculous as it was reported that a 61-year-old piece of we've ever held in the United wedding cake sold for \$26,000 States, and as a royal collection, (£17,300). Though likely very more or less unprecedented in stale by now, the cake, sealed history," said Sotheby's in a 3in-square white box, had expert Joe Friedman. One has been valued at up to \$1,000 to go back to the 17th centu-(£660) in a pre-sale estimate. More than 40,000 lots are

being sold from the Bois de possessions of Charles I." Boulogne mansion in Paris arranged by Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods the sword sold for £28,000.

who now owns the property. the sale, which will take place audience of more than 1,000

PRIVATE and personal pos- potential buyers and telephone bids from across the world. Among the lots is the abdication in 1936 so that he Reports of the bidding could marry "the woman I

"This is the biggest auction ry to find anything comparable - the sale of the

An early highlight was the where the royal couple lived sale of a ceremonial sword givin exile after the abdication en to Edward in July 1911 to crisis in 1936. The sale was mark his installation as a duke. Valued at up to £36,000, A portrait of the Duchess

The opening session of by the late British painter Cecil Beaton, valued before over nine days, attracted an the sale at £10,000 was purchased for £80,000.



Up and away: Brian Milton, 55, at the helm of his single-engined GT Global Flyer; he and co-pilot Keith Reynolds, 45, will set off from London at the end of March for an 80-day trip to attempt the first circumnavigation of the globe by a microlight aircraft, in the 175th arginograph was of heles Versal the World in Fighty Days. Photograph: Andrew Buurman to attempt the first circumnavigation of the globe by a microlight aircraft, in the 125th anniversary year of Jules Verne's Around the World in Eighty Days Photograph: Andrew Buurman

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## Inquiry to look into CJD link with water

By Charles Arthur Science Editor

The official BSE inquiry is to consider claims that five of the cases of "human BSE" in the UK could have been caused by material from infected cattle leaking into water supplies.

A spokeswoman for the investigation confirmed yesterday that it will examine allegations by Dr Alan Colchester, consultant neurologist at Guy's Hospital in London, who believes water in Kent may have been contaminated by a rendering plant which disposed of the remains of cattle with BSE.

But she emphasised that such consideration is part of the inquiry's wide-ranging consideration of written evidence from all quarters, in its attempt to understand how the cattle disease became epidemic in the UK, and how it led to the fatal human disorder of "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (v-CID), which has so far killed 23 Britons.

evidence from all the scientists £5m on transforming the renwho we think the inquiry should dering plant into one of the most hear from," the spokeswoman sophisticated in the country. said. "We are not singling out anyone at this stage."

However early next month the inquiry, led by Lord Justice Phillips, will start calling people to give oral evidence as a follow up to the present collection of written data.

Five of the 23 people who arrived in 1994. have died from v-CJD came from Kent and two others had connections with the county. Dr dio 4 Today programme, he ex- historic battle."

pressed concern about Thruxted Mill, just outside Canterbury, one of four rendering plants asked by the Government to handle hundreds of tons of potentially infected cattle

"We know that infected material from infected animal brains with this disease can survive for long periods in the environment - years we're talking about here," he said. "There's really quite strong evidence that, at least some years ago, there was very poor procedural supervision at that mill [Thruxted]: infected remains of animals were left lying around and probably contaminated protein-carrying material is still lying around in large quantities in and under the soil on that site."

He added that potentially the soil could infect humans who came into contact with it through the mouth, eyes, nose and through the water supply.

Cheale Meats, the company which has owned Thruxted Mill "We are involved in taking since 1991, says it has invested

The Mid Kent Water Company says its tests prove the water is safe. However, there is no proven test for BSE in water.

But David Richardson, plant manager at Thruxted Mill, admitted that "raw material" was put outside the plant before he

"It was outside when I first came here: there wasn't odour control, there was poor infra-Colchester treated a number of structure, no proper effluent the cases in the Ashford area. treatment, so therefore we Speaking yesterday on the Ra- were, from day one, fighting an

#### Steam builds up on Channel link

Britain will be sidelined in Europe on "a rusty branch line building of the link and new stafrom Brussels" if the high speed Channel Tunnel rail link is not ford and St Pancras in London built, a conference was told to-

Delegates from the public and private sectors gathered in Birmingham to launch the Fast Coast Mainline. Tracks to Europe Alliance, a group committed to ensuring the rail link stays on track.

National Planning Forum chairman Stewart Stacey told delegates: "If Britain is to be at the heart of Europe, it is neither acceptable that London is on a rusty branch from Brussels nor that our regions are beyond the buffer stops."

The group took action after it was revealed that London & rent dilemma, given the Continental Railways was having difficulty fulfilling the contract to build the proposed £5.4bn route.

The Alliance believes the tions at Ebbsfleet in Kent, Stratwill be vital to businesses across the country. It also hopes to secure links from the Channel Tunnel to the West and East

The chairman of the Local Government Initiative, Cheshire councillor Derek Bateman, said the project had been mishandled from its inception.

"Changes in route, changes in costs, changes in whether it's public or private sector, changes in the whole rail industry ... the list goes on. I have every sympathy with John Prescott's cursituation he has inherited, and I can only wish John well in climbing out of a deep bomb crater hole, dug by others."



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## Chemicals, bugs and deadly toxins - the new

#### **ANTHRAX**

Symptoms: Fever, malaise. facigue, cough and mild chest discomfort is followed by severe respiratory distress with dyspnea, diaphoresis, strider and cyanosis. Shock and death occurs within 24 to 36 hours of severe symptoms.

History: Anthrax spores were weaponised by the US in the 1950s and 1960s before the programme was terminated. As recently as 1995 Iraq admitted to weaponising anthrax.

Treatment: It is usually not effective after symptoms are present, however the US Army medical management suggests high dose antiblotic treatment with penkillin. ciprofloxacin or doxycycline.

#### BUTOLINUM

Symptoms: Stomach pains dizziness, diarrhoea, muscular weakness. The whole body including the muscles of the respiratory system become paralysed. leading to death by suffocation within days.

History: Several countries have admitted to weaponising botulinum toxins, including Iraq. In 1995 it was revealed that Iraq not only researched, but had filled and deployed more than 100 munitions with botulinum toxins.

Lethal dosage: The most lethal substance known to man. One teaspoon can kill 7 million people.

Treatment: A vaccine is available for those at high risk of exposure, but must be taken in advance. No known antidote after the symptoms

Charles Arthur, Science Editor, on how to make the weapons, while Nicholas von Herberstein looks at their history and lethal effect

THE NEWS that you can buy anthrax by mail order may come as a shock to many, but a decade ago two experts in the field of chemical and biological weapons noted that in the United States, "marijuana is more closely regulated ... than access to and distribution of most deadly biological cultures". And we all know how successful the "war on drugs" has been in the US.

Today, anthrax is still on sale: the American Type Culture Collection in Rockville, Maryland, offers four different kinds - shipped freeze-dried, and costing about \$140 (£88) for a sample. The ATCC describes its mission as "to acquire, authenticate, and maintain reference cultures, related biological materials, and associated data, and to distribute these to qualified scientists in government, industry, and education". Its catalogue contains thousands of samples of viruses, bacteria and other toxins.

However, as investigators have noted, persuading the ATCC that you are a suitably qualified scientist is "about as difficult as forging a prescription".

Considering that, and the fact that you can produce enough chlorine to kill at least one person (probably yourself) using items found under most household sinks, the question is: why do terrorists rarely choose to wage war using biological or chemical weapons?



War ritual: Israeli dancers wearing plastic sheets and gas masks perform at a 'germ warfare' party in a Tel Aviv nightclub early yesterday Photograph: AFP

more dangerous to manufacture and handle than a standard bomb. Few would have the confidence, or the training, of the members of the Red Army Faction, which in 1984 was discovered to be growing the hacterial

botulinal toxin in a bathtub.

Intelligence experts reckon that proper growth and control of a bacterial toxin requires expertise not only in graduatelevel microbiology, but also in The broad answer is that

only do you have to grow your seen, creating the problem of hurdle. Although ballpoint-pen the cultish terrorist groups such distribute it without killing yourself first, and without it dying in your efforts are ignored. the flask - deadly microbes are often surprisingly sensitive.

ricin, bubonic plague and anthrax probably pose more danger to the terrorist than the Both have clearly visible effects target in addition, there's always within minutes of exposure. pathology, aerosol physics and an incubation period before But it's the manufacture and rethe effect of any attack will be lease which pose the major

bug in a bacterial brewery (cost- whether to claim responsibility ing some thousands of pounds), early on (which might allow vacyou also have to know how to cination and precautions) or wait, and perhaps discover that

By contrast, the dedicated mass-murderer might think that Toxins and organisms such as chemical weapons such as sarin and VX (both nerve agents) and mustard gas sound preferable.

ink and insecticides are both, ac- as the Baader-Meinhof Group cording to the Canadian Secu- and Aum Shinri Kyo, which atrity Intelligence Service, "only one chemical step away from sarin", it is a big step.

tracted highly educated people,

has a number of very intelligent

and well-trained scientists, such

technologies are relatively easy

to obtain and fund. But the un-

certainty factor, such as the

problem if the wind blows

chemical weapons back into

forestalls their use.

Of course, for Iraq, which

have opted for such means.

Producing nerve agents and other chemical weapons requires the manipulation of reagents such as hydrofluoric acid and organophosphates, and it's critical to get the temperatures and amounts correct, or you end up

with a relatively harmless soup. your own territory, generally For all those reasons, only

SARIN

Symptoms: Runny nose, tightness of these, dimming of visions, drooling, involuntary urination or defecation, twitching, jerking, convulsion, coma and loss of breath and death.

History: Sarin was first developed by Dr Gerhard Shrader in 1938, but mass produced by the US after the Second World War.

Treatment: Self-injection of Atropine or oxime into the thigh. Auto injectors are military only; not available to general public.

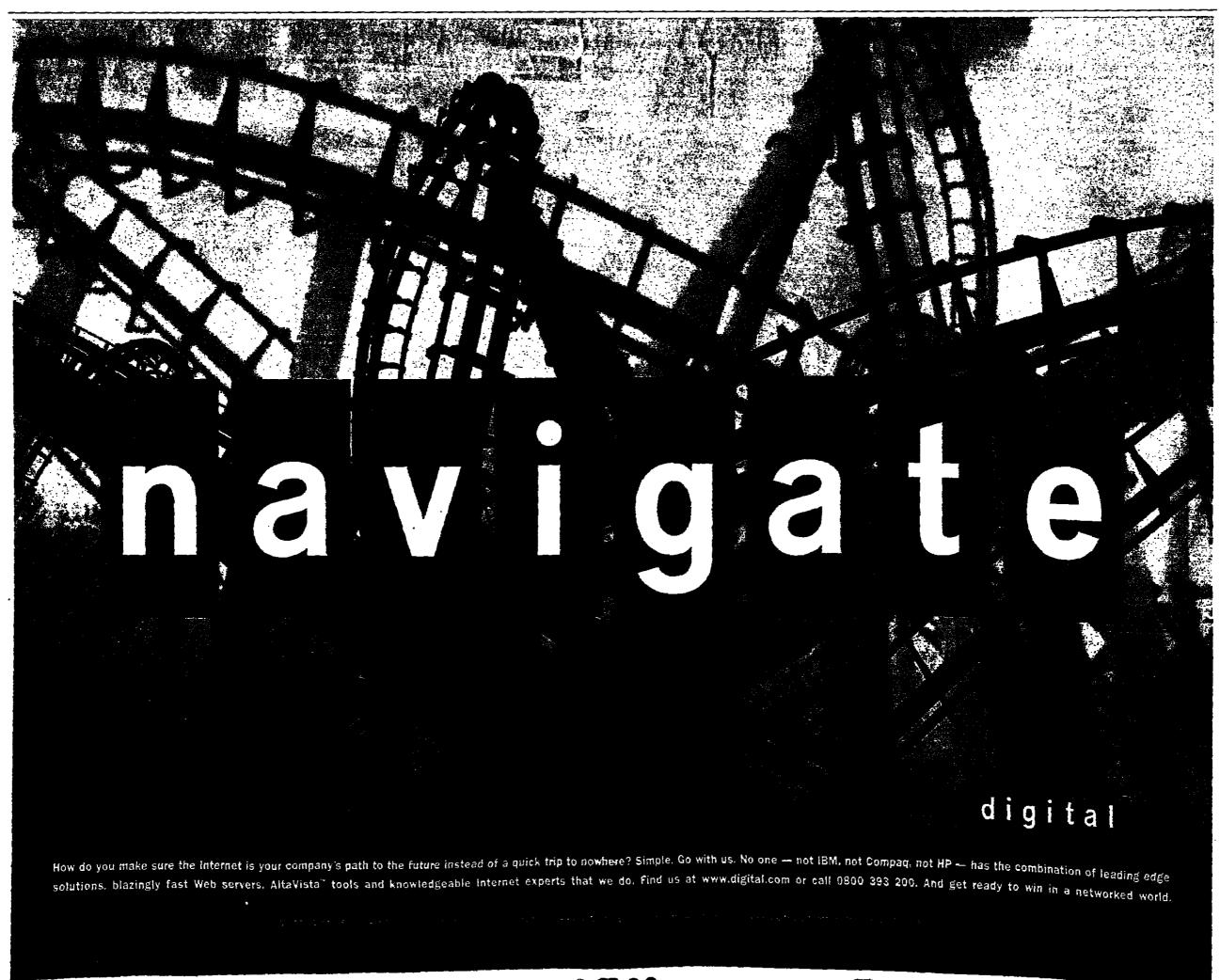
Lethal dosage: A small quantity splashed on the skin will produce enough vapours to exceed the lethal dosage (one teaspoon of sarin can kill 10,000 people).

Symptoms: Runny nose, tightness of chest, dimming of visions, drooling, involuntary urination or defecation, twitching, jerking, convulsion, coma and finally cessation of breathing and death.

History: A technological improvement over the sarin gas, mass production of VX began in the United States in 1961.

Treatment: Self-Injection of Atropine or oxime into the thigh. Though not available to general public, auto injectors are issued to all military forces as part of their NBC equipment.

Lethal dosage: Dermally VX is 300 times more toxic than sarin. The amount one can place on the head of a pin is sufficient to produce death in a human being.



Link to Lite

## DIY terrorist's arsenal



William Leavitt (left) and Larry Harris in court in Nevada, charged with possession of germ warfare agent

#### Anthrax scare shocks America

By Tim Cornwell in Los Angeles

AMERICANS reeled from the shock of a major terrorist scare yesterday, with television news and talk shows filled with discussion of an alleged anthrax plot in

men were arrested and charged with possession of the deadly germ warfare agent, became increasingly murky.

As the United States prepared for military action against Iraq, justified in large part by its alleged chemical and biological weapons program, Larry Harris, 46, and treatments for victims of biological warfare. oratory, but claimed his research for a book William Leavitt. 47, appeared in a Nevada

determine whether they had indeed been driving down the Las Vegas strip with an-

trained microbiologist, had ties to a far-right white supremacist group, the Aryan Nations, as recently as 1995, claiming the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Hours after an informant reported he had bragged of possessing "military-grade" But the details of the affair, in which two anthrax, a team of 100 FBI agents and police swooped on the two men.

President Bill Clinton was briefed personally on the case. But a lawyer for Leav- about the case, it was Harris' name that apitt described his client as a respectable parently triggered the massive response businessman and former Mormon bishop Last year, he pleaded guilty to acquiring who was interested in investing in radical plague bacteria by mail order from a lab-

Harris has claimed to be testing a ray courtroom laden with leg and arm shackles. machine that kills toxic bacteria like anthrax ing biological terror. The FBI affidavit, how-Test results were awaited yesterday to and bubonic plague. Tests continued yes-ever, said that last summer, he had spoken terday on the car the men were driving which was isolated and wrapped in plastic in in the New York subway.

thrax in the boot of their car. Harris, a at a US airbase. Eight to10 leather bags marked "biological" and stashed in the boot were apparently the focus of the FBL

But Leavitt's lawyer predicted that scientists would find only anthrax vaccine used on farm animals. When the news broke residents of suburban Henderson, near Las Vegas, flooded local radio stations with calls asking whether they should evacuate.

With many questions still to be answered was aimed at preventing rather than causof his plans to unleash bubonic plague tox-

### How cult caused death on the Tokyo subway

AT THE beight of the morning rush hour on 20 March 1995, commuters on three lines on the Tokyo subway began to notice an unpleasant smell. Many began to feel sick, others suffered headaches and pain in their eyes. By the time the trains stopped at the stations, disgorging thousands of fainting, vorniting passengers, the damage had been done, writes Richard Lloyd Party.

Twelve people died and more than 5,000 others suffered ill-effects, ranging from temporary nausea to post-traumatic mental illness and permanent coma. The sense of shock in Japan, a country with low rates of violent crime and no history of domestic terrorism, was incalculable.

The Tokyo nerve-gas attack, an attempt to kick-start the Apocalypse by a religious cult named Aum Shinri Kyo, was the first terrorist use of chemical weapons. That a bunch of Buddhist crackpots in white pyjamas could manufacture the nerve gas sarin and release it into the middle of the world's biggest city caused alarm not just in Japan, but in security agencies around the world.

The story of Aum is in some the large- scale amateur manufacture of weapons of mass owed much to the ingenuity of attempted to disperse anthrax in, simulant B and anthrax the Aum leader, Shoko Asahara, it also had a lot to do with the anticipated decimation of the incompetence of the Japanese city never took place.



Shoko Asahara: Built laboratories on Mt Fuji

police who for months had been bombarded with clues that Aum was up to no good.

Aum, moreover, was not simply a bunch of deluded hippies - among its members were scientists and technicians from some of the best universities in the country. Asahara built wellequipped laboratories in huge metal sheds on the slopes of Mt Fuji. He imported ex-Soviet technology and know how and over the years thousands of tonnes of chemicals were assembled at the Aum HQ, allegedly for the manufacture of ways illustrates the difficulties in fertiliser. But even with these resources, Aum's most ambi-

tious plans failed. On occasions Aum members and botulism in Tokyo, but the

#### **UN** fears over Iraqi armoury

By Fran Abrams and Andrew Marshall

inspections, the United a remotely credible account of Nations still fears that Iraq Iraq's biological warfare proharbours a huge potential armoury of chemical and biological weapons.

The Unscom executive chairman, Richard Butler, says Before the Gulf War, Iraq had in his latest report that Iraq could produce as much as 200 tons (180 metric tons) of the deadly nerve agent VX and continues to conceal information about its missile warheads.

Mr Butler reported after meetings in Iraq last month that his previously "businesslike" talks with the Iraqis bad been punctuated by "abuse" and "denigration." Although the change of manner came in a dispute over access to eight "presidential sites," Mr Butler's reports show there is real cause for concern. The sites are buge and contain other buildings, including ware-

houses as well as palaces. UN inspectors who have been working to identify and destroy Iraq's armoury since 1991 have reported mixed progress. Most of Saddam Hussein's missiles and a large number of chemical weapons had been destroyed, they said, but there were real fears about his biological warfare programme.

The information given by Iraq about biological weapons had been inaccurate and often contradictory. However, it was believed that it held quantities of aflatoxin, which destroys the immune system, botulinum tox-

The Iraqis have admitted filling R400 bombs with anthrax

spores and botulinum toxin, though it is not known how many. The latest bulletin from DESPITE seven years of the country's officials "fails to give

> Similar problems existed with chemical weapons, though there had been more progress. procured more than 1,000 items of production equipment for chemical weapons including mustard shells, which cause terrible skin damage, Agent VX, a highly toxic nerve agent used against the Kurds at Halabja and sarin, the nerve agent

used in Nazi gas chambers. In his latest draft report, the chief UN weapons inspector concludes that Iraq could produce as much as 200 tons (180 metric tons) of VX. Because the UN experts have not been able to assess Iraq's abilities, "there is no credible technical reason why Iraq should fail in the pro-

duction of VX," the report says. Unscom had supervised the destruction of 325 pieces of equipment along with 275 tons of "precursor chemicals" for the weapons. However, much of the equipment was only discovered in August 1997 and inspectors believe the Iraqi government has thousands of tons of chemicals which could be used to

Of 819 long-range missiles imported by President Saddam in the 1980s, 817 had been accounted for. More than 500 had been used in the Iran-Iraq war, 93 in the Gulf War and 77 in training and testing. The rest had been destroyed, either unilaterally or under supervision by Unscom.

The commence of the control of the c





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## Armada of doom lies in wait for Saddam

Emma Daly, on a US aircraft-carrier in the Gulf, watches preparations for war

carrier, 60ft above the sea, is an tiny spaces, wing-tips touchawe-inspiring place to be, an ab- ing, for storage on the runway surd triumph of planning over or in the hangar below. common sense. Who would have thought that 4.5 acres of non-slip surface could act as the power of the aircraft launchrunway to dozens of jet fighters, ing; it is positively awe-inspirscreaming on and off at over ing to fly off the ship under 100mph, aided by steam-powered catapults and heavy cables?

bodied by the USS George Washington and USS Independence, the carriers leading 18 sister ships of the US Navy's Fifth it leaves the 310ft runway. Pas-Fleet through the jade waters of the Gulf. If Mr Annan's mission at Iraq, a deadly wave launched at sea will signal the start of Opcration Desert Thunder.

The first-time visitor can only stand, slack-jawed, as the ship's company, wearing colourcoded "float coats", or lifejackets, load missiles, clean windscreens or signal pilots whoop from the crew, you are during the 100 sorties the 70- flung back in your seat by an plus planes fly a day. Take-off involves pinning the aircraft's 10G) - but only for a couple of the runway. The idea is to drop nose to the steel head of a catapult. Engines roar, steam pressure builds, then suddenly a pin snaps and the plane is rocketed down the ranway and to-

wards the waters or the Gulf. To save space, planes move around on deck with their wings

THE flight-deck of an aircraft- men to manoeuvre them into

It is impressive enough to stand on the flight-deck and feel catapuit power, even in a COD, as the small transport planes The menace behind Kofi that bring in mail and visitors Annan's peace mission is em- are known, and which does 0 to 139mph in less than three seconds; an F-14 Tomcat fighter will reach 175mph by the time sengers in a COD, who sit facing the tail and firmly strapped fails and the US decides to strike in by a harness, are ordered to grip the belts across the chest, brace their feet on the seat in front and lean forward for the "cat shot".

> Adrenalin starts pumping (particularly around the quaking body of the nervous flyer) and then, with a rush and a overwhelming force (about 8 to steel cables stretched across seconds. There is a sudden resmoothly and calmly, away from the carrier. God only knows what it must feel like in a jet the runway, which does not

"Recovery" is another arresting experience: the shortest. folded back like flies or bent up sharpest landing you could have land in about a 10th square passing the engine-room where without actually crashing. In-



Right stuff: Pilots kitting out on the aircraft-carrier USS George Washington for a sortie in F-14 fighters

Photograph: Reuters

bar with a shallow hook at the end and then aim for one of four the wheels between wires three lease and the plane is climbing, and four, so that the hook snags the third cable and drags the aircraft to a halt 300ft along stretch the full quarter-mile length of the ship.

You're basically trying to

coming pilots lower a straight Harville, a COD pilot who flew us off the George Washington. "The first few times it is terri-

> Cables are checked each day, and each one is changed after it has caught 100 planes.

If a cable were to break - and it has happened - it would whip back and kill anyone in the way. The sounds of a landing, or "trap", reverberate throughout the 17-deck ship, but anyone proach the ship flying low over known as a bolter. Thankfully, land in about a 10ft square passing the engine-room where the sea, the pilot yanks it to one we only watched the night hawk cruise missiles area," said Lieutenant Greg the arresting gear operates is side; the water appears at right flights - launch and recovery range of 1,000 miles.

screech as the cable rips out to catch 30 tons of jet fighter.

Of course, landing on the carrier doesn't just involve touching down. First you must survive the "carrier break", something aircrews explain to hapless civilians with some rel-

practically deafened by the angles as you hang in your seat, continues as normal after dark. heart in your mouth, before it

levels off for landing. The fighters come in at about 145mph; the other planes slow down to 95mph or so - still quite an emergency stop. And everyone comes in on full throttle, because if you miss the wire. ish and which is supposed to the sea looms large and exslow the aircraft down. What tremely close and you had betthis means is that, as you ap- ter be able to take off at once,

Each carrier is loaded with 4,600,000to of ammunition. The US armada in the Gulf carries 18,690 sailors and marines and 93 strike aircraft, along with planes that can listen to radar and radio and jam enemy signals. It includes the USS Guam, an amphibious assault ship carrying attack helicopters, and eight ships (including two submarines) that can fire Tomahawk cruise missiles, with a

#### **Kuwait** embassy set for exodus

THE United States on Tuesday offered dependants of its diplomats in Kuwait and Israel the chance to leave the region if they wish, a move which could further raise the level of alarm over Iraqi attacks with chemical arms. "It is official," a US embassy spokesman said. A senior Western diplomat

in Kuwait said: "Everybody has been watching for weeks what the Americans will do ... This step might cause panic but it also depends on what other people (embassies) will do."

The "authorised departure" recommendation at State Department expense is currently being delivered to US diplomats in Kuwait and Israel, one diplomat said. The American families are not being ordered to leave but "if they want to leave they can leave and the government pays their way."
one official in Washington said.

The recommendation to US officials "tells dependants they are allowed to leave if they choose," a US diplomat in Kuwait said. "The offer is effective immediately."

There are some 8,000 American civilians in Kuwait but the exact size of the US embassy staff was not immediately known. "We are not allowed to disclose this information but there are between 100 and 200 US diplomats and dependants in Kuwait," an embassy spokesman said. Several US

embassy staff were seen on yesterday with their families in public in Kuwait. Diplomats in Kuwait said the much smaller German embassy there had already made a similar move while it, the Spanish and Swiss embassies were due to distribute gas masks to their citizens in Kuwait. Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and was expelled by a US-led coalition in the 1991 Reuters, Kuwait

Same in St Mart

INDEPENDENT

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## INDEPENDENT Springtime in the





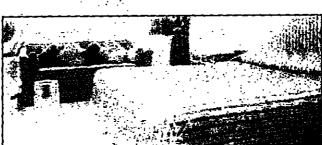
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The Independent and Independent on Sunday have joined forces with Inter-Continental Hotels to offer readers a unique 2 for 1 weekend promotion. Available at a selection of hotels in the UK and Europe, rates for these special weekends start from as little as £60 per room, per weekend and include breakfast for 2 each morning and all taxes and service charges. This fantastic 2 for 1 deal, which represents a 50% saving on the usual weekend rates, is available exclusively to Independent readers, and is on offer every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from now right through until the end of April 1998.

#### **HOW TO BOOK**

Simply collect 4 out of the 7 tokens we will be printing every day until Friday 27th February. Choose the dates that you want to stay and telephone the Inter-Continental Central Reservation office on 0181 847 2277. Callers should quote 'The Independent Weekend Promotion' when making their booking. On your arrival at the hotel you should present your tokens in order to qualify. All bookings are subject to

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As an extra bonus for independent readers, these amazing weekend rates will be available throughout the Easter period at the London and Edinburgh hotels. The 2 for 1 deal (or 4 for 2 during Easter) will be on offer for a period of five nights, starting from Thursday 9th April right through to Monday 13th April inclusive.

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#### Rate(per room pert weekend) £195

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London\*\*\*\*\* In Portman Square in the centre of the west End with the Oxford Street just two minutes walk. Recently repovated to the highest standards, the Churchill Inter-Continental boasts luxurious accommodation, a superb restaurant, Clementines and a new Churchill Bar & Cigar Divan. Guests have the use of a private tennis

court just opposite the hotel. Rate(per room pert weekend) £189

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Perfectly situated close to the shopping area of Kensington and Knightsbridge. With 27 floors, many of the hotels 910 bedrooms and suites enjoy superb views over the London skyline. A wide choice of restaurants and bars include the Gloucester Road Deli with its authentic 'New York' atmosphere and the Kens-tion).

ington Garden Café. Rate(per room pert weekend) £129

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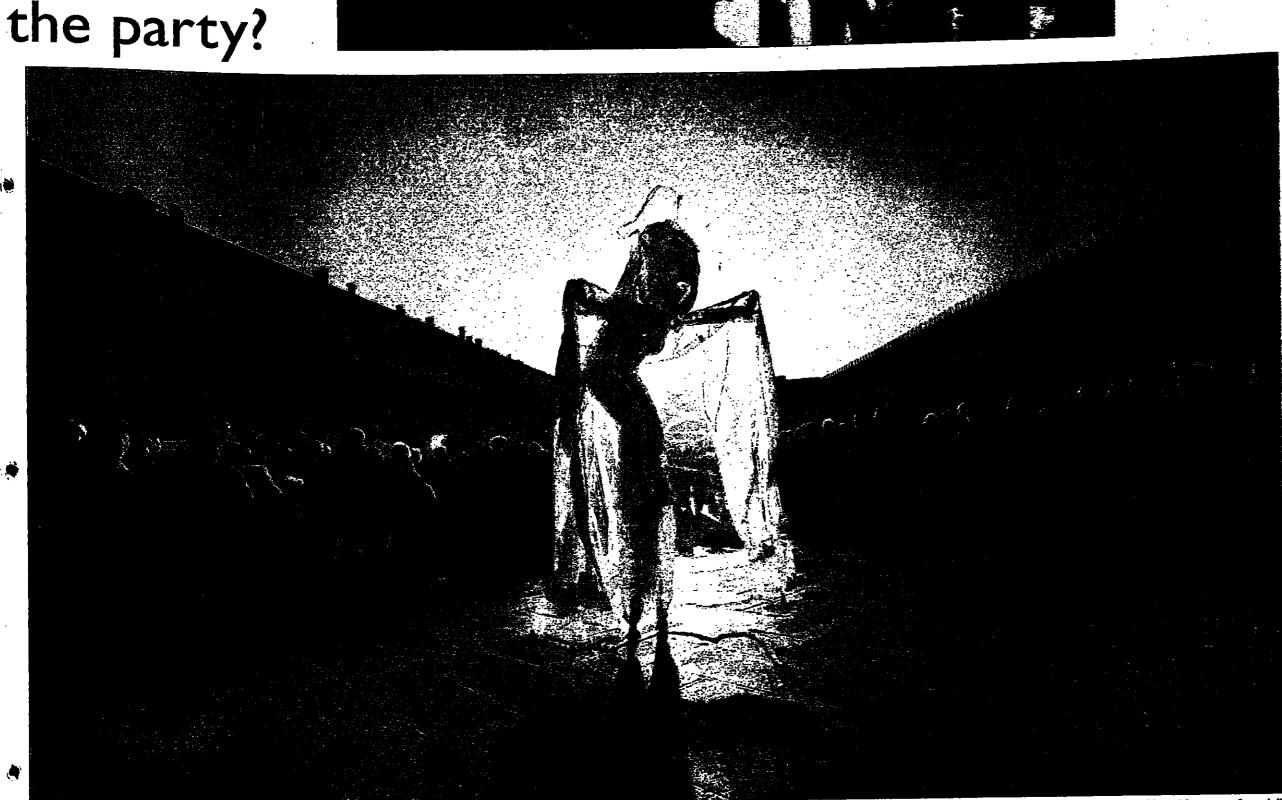
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Venice is all odus dressed up for carnival

time. But

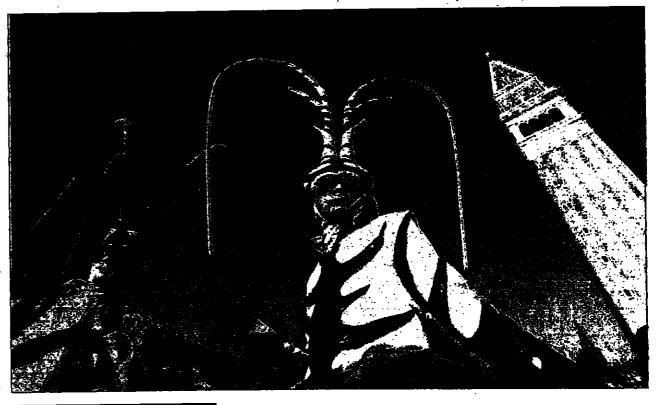
\*where is

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN HARRIS



Set pieces in St Mark's Square: Tourists gather at dusk to watch the carnival performers. Bottom, Mihail Chemiakin's newly unveiled statue of Casanova, who stopped by for coffee at Cafe Florian (below left) on his escape from jail





1 Casanova's day it was an excuse for wildness, says indrew Gumbel. Now the tourists have taken over

tion by the waterfront outside the Doge's dace. With the glint of the morning sun their saffron and periwinkle blue cosmes, they gave each other a low stylised w and stared intently into the beaky white

isks hiding their faces. In the bawdy days of carnivals past, this ght have been a lovers' tryst to crown a ig night of flirtatious debauchery. But in nitised modern-day Venice, it was someng altogether less exciting. The peacock uple waited for a small crowd to gather into town. ound them, unfolded their arms to reveal : gold-sequinned interior of their cosnes (to "oohs" and applause as they did ) and spent the next 10 minutes being

otographed by Japanese tourists. It is hard to think of the Venice carni-I these days as much more than a glorid photo opportunity. Granted, those eticulously tailored costumes - the ro-

-IE PEACOCK couple made their assig- bustly coloured harlequin suits and soft velvet doublets, the diabolical black-hooded capes and plunging multi-coloured ball gowns - look fantastic against the irresistible backdrop of the Piazza San Marco. It is remarkable that the designers and wearers of these outlandish outlits should spontaneously travel to Venice from the four corners of the world for the sheer pleasure of showing them off to the tourist groups and adult-education photography classes who have dutifully followed them

But where are the parties that made carnival famous for the length of Venice's memorable decline in the 18th century? And where are the Venetians? By day, the carnival figures look like mannequins or stray theatrical extras, not the revellers they represent. By night, they are nowhere to be seen; for all but a handful of the festive 10 days the city slumps into its habitual



slumber shortly after the bars and restaurants close around 11 o'clock.

Native Venetians make that sure they reach their souvenir shops and tourist who cannot stand the idea of late-night restaurants early to catch the excellent pass-noise; rather than encouraging the festiv-

ing trade, but otherwise carnival appears to leave them thoroughly apathetic. Most of the old city's population are pensioners

ities, they have recently been devoting their and now has a statue to his name gracing energies to closing one of Venice's few remaining rock venues.

When the Venice carnival was revived after a long hiatus in the late Seventies, the idea was to stage a proper festival, with music, poetry and plays oozing out of the city's theatres. But as the tourist numbers have swelled, all but one of the city's theatres bave closed -or, as in the case of the Fernice opera house, burned down - leaving little

by way of carnival venues. The lone Teatro Goldoni is doing its best this year, putting on a crowded programme of events, including a play, a musical and concerts by Elvis Costello and David Byrne. Last night, Piazza San Marco hosted the inevitable masked ball, while tomorrow will see a parade of torchlit boats around the lagoon illuminated by fireworks.

These are isolated high spots, however. The event would seem strangely bloodless to the man providing the theme of this year's carnival, the pan-European bed-Casanova, who died exactly 200 years ago a party, go to Rio.

In Casanova's day, carnival started in October and carried on until Lent. The masks and costumes broke down barriers of class and propriety and provided the perfect excuse for everyone, from noble ladies to footmen, to broaden the range and number of their sexual conquests.

Hair was piled outrageously high and necklines cut outrageously low; revellers would proceed from parades of wild animals, jugglers and tumblers to the theatre. and on to all-night sessions in gambling dens and whorehouses before appearing, dishevelled and exhausted for the ritual morning parade of debauchees at the Rialto vegetable market.

Ah, those were the days. Venice is no longer a city of hedonistic decadence but rather a city of tourist scam artists and ripoff merchants who do not deserve the riches of their unique urban environment. Carnival can provide pretty colours, polite artistic events and the occasional highhopper and occasional spy Giacomo profile concert. But if you are looking for

## Hills are alive to Trapp family's squabble Monica's father

By Marcus Tanner

The family inspired the film the Sound of Music, but 60 years after they escaped the Nazi takeover of Austria, the von Trapps are no longer singing from the same hymn sheet.

Instead, the cosy clan celebrated on screen for its exemplary family values is involved in a most unharmonious struggle for control of the family business, an Austrian-style lodge at Stowe, in the hills of Vermont.

Lawyers representing two branches of the family appeared before the Vermont Supreme Court this week to argue whether one branch shortchanged the other by \$3m. "It's sad," said Johannes von Trapp, youngest child of Maria von Trapp. "It wouldn't have happened while my mother was alive." The convent girl who Climbed Every Mountain when she was played by Julie Andrewes died in 1987.

Tension blew up between the descendants of the entertainers from the Alps in 1993 after family members ousted Johannes von Trapp as president of the corporation running the Trapp family Lodge. He then regained control of the company the following year, after which his sis-

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children objected and cashed in due roughly twice as much and their shares, receiving \$2.5m from the business. However, they later challenged the payter and some of his brother's ment in court, saying they were

in May, a County Superior Court ordered Trapp Family Lodge Inc to pay the higher val-

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lawyers have now appealed. But if the Supreme Court up- 1980 but was rebuilt as a hotel holds the award, Johannes von Trapp says he may have to sell the lodge, which comes with restaurants and more than 2,000

Austria in 1938, eventually set- itors each year.

Johannes von Trapp's tling in the hills above Stowe. The first lodge burned down in with cottages and time-share

Drawn no doubt, by curiosity fuelled by the continuing popularity of the famous film. The von Trapp family fled the lodge has about 150,000 vis-

# attacks 'horrors'

By Mary Dejevsky in Washington

The father of Monica Lewinsky, the former White House trainee alleged to have had a relationship with President Bill Clinton, has broken his silence with a bitter tirade against her treatment by the judicial authorities. comparing it to the McCarthy interrogations and the Inquisi-

Dr Bernard Lewinsky, a cancer specialist whose California home provided his daughter with brief respite from the Washington media circus two weeks ago, said he felt it was time to "speak up about the horrors that she has gone through and continues to go through".

In a television interview with ABC television's Barbara Walters, to be broadcast last night but, like so much in this case, heavily leaked - Dr Lewinsky reserved special venom for Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor overseeing the case.

He should "lay off", he said. 'I think he's totally out of control. My daughter has not done anything from the federal point of view. She's not a murderer. She's not a spy. There was an your daughter could have made aging his client's case.

Lewinsky: Father said she had endured 'horrors'

alleged involvement in a civil

"What is going on, and what Ken Starr has brought upon her. is unconscionable, to my mind. To pit a mother against her daughter, to coerce her to talk - to me, it's reminiscent of the McCarthy era, of the Inquisition, and even, you know, you could stretch it and say the Hitler era, It's awful. I can't be-

lieve it's happening."

Dr Lewinsky defended his daughter's truthfulness, saying that although she might be "excitable", she would not have lied about her relations with the President. Asked "Do you think

up a whole relationship with the President that didn't exist?", he replied "I can't imagine her

making that up." Both Monica Lewinsky's parents, who divorced when she was in her teens, are now caught up in their daughter's problems Her mother, Marcia Lewis who shared her Washington flat and, it is said. personal confidences, with her daughter spent three days last week giving evidence to the investigation and has still to complete her tes-

She was allowed to leave the stand after suffering an emo-

tional seizure. Meanwhile, new leaks from tape-recorded conversations between Ms Lewinsky and her colleague Linda Tripp - the tapes that offered the first evidence of a relationship hetween Ms Lewinsky and the President - had Ms Lewinsky supposedly boasting of having stolen a timetable for one of Mr Clinton's foreign visits from the desk of her boss in the Pen-

This provoked an angry response from Ms Lewinsky's wyer, William Ginsburg, who said selective leaking was dam-

#### America clamps down on highway monsters

By Mary Dejevsky

After a decade in which they have steadily gained ascendancy on America's roads, the four-wheel drive suburban mega-cars known by the ugly acronym SUV - sports utility vehicle - are suddenly under attack. You name it, they are guilty of it: they are too big, too profligate, too expensive, but most of all, too dangerous.

Going by sporty names like Rodeo and Rava, they tend to be driven by a certain class and Hampstead as in the Hamptons, to conduct six crash tests to es- of a vehicle has a big effect both report called for urgent studies gerous to other road users.

environmentally responsible car has been bullied by one recently.

The only difference between that over here the offending beasts are more numerous and bigger. Much bigger.

The difficulty until now has been to translate the complaints from common or garden car drivers into sound evidence. But now the clamour has grown to the point where the "interface" between cars and SUVs is to be tested. Starting yesterday, the they may or may not have a National Highway Traffic Safeflock of children on board. You ty Administration (NHTSA) -

with SUVs.

As so often in America, the first impetus for change came plaints of car drivers went largely unheeded - but from the insurance companies. They found that they were paying out ever larger sums in compensation for death, injury and car ities are five times as high in cars damage after crashes in which a car was worsted by an SUV. The suspicion mounted that America's highways were becoming the scene of vastly unequal combat.

A series of studies has con-

and like as not your small, low, tablish how cars fare in collisions on its capacity to protect the oc- to improve the crash-worthiness

"agressivity" - the harm it is likely to inflict on the occupants of such study, published this week by the University of Michigan's transportation research institute, says that when a car and an SUV collide head-on, fatalas in SUVs. The ratio was lower - three to one - in crashes be-

In other crashes, the ratio for fatalities was much higher - up to 30 to one where SUVs

cupants in a crash and on of passenger cars and reduce the aggressiveness\* of SUVs.

For General Motors, the the two sides of the Atlantic is not from consumers - the com- the other vehicle. The latest study was greeted more as a vindication of SUV safety than an indictment of cars. Such reas surance was particularly welcome because of criticism that the higher centre of gravity of SUVs could make them unstable at high speed. The increasing number of SUV-drivers also tween cars and the all-American see little problem. If they want workhorse, the pick-up truck. a bigger, heavier, safer car and are prepared to pay the higher price and fuel costs, why not? The anti-SUV coalition objects see almost as many of them in the main road safety agency - is cluded that the size and weight hit cars on the driver's side. The that SUVs are inherently dan-

#### Don't blame Oprah on beef

AN ECONOMIC expert testified in court yesterday that factors such as drought, high corn prices and weak exports had far more impact on a cattle market slump than anything said on Oprah Winfrey's talk show.

"This [declining market] was already happening in response to a drop in consumption in Southeast Asia ... not regarding anything to do with what happened on this show," said Marvin Hayenga, an Iowa State University agricultural economics professor.

A group of Texas cattlemen claim that a market plunge following Ms Winfrey's April 1996 talk show on "dangerous foods" cost them \$12m. - AP, Texas

#### UN kidnap

GEORGIAN and United Nations officials negotiated with gunmen holding four United Nations observers as troops surrounded a remote farmhouse in Abkhazia where the hostage-takers were holed up. "As far as we know, all the hostages are alive. We hope that the problem will be solved very soon," Peter Hodel, a UN regional deputy commander said - Reuters, Dzhikhashkari

#### Human rights

The lower house of parliament in Moscow ratified the European human rights convention but avoided a ban on capital punishment, despite promising to halt the death penalty in January 1996 when it joined the Council of Europe. Ninety-two people were executed in 1996, placing Russia third in the world in executions behind China and Uktaine. -- AP, Moscow

#### Panda death

ONE OF China's rare giant pandas has died at age 30, exceeding the average panda life expectancy by about 10 years. Qiang Qiang, a female, died on 28 January, after showing signs of senility. - Reuters, Peking

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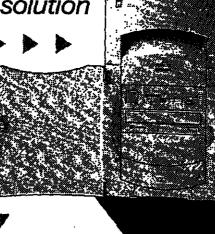
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# Freetown emerges from the shadow of death

to normal in the Sierra Leone capital, says Ed McLoughlin in Freetown

With its easy-going Creole cul-ture and pleasantly seedy, balconv-lined streets. Freetown has long been known as the New Orleans of Africa. Now, following the flight of Major Johnny Paul Koroma and his street gang junta, it feels like New Orleans during Mardi Gras.

A week after the first Nigerian peace-keeping troops fought their way into the town centre something approaching normal life has returned to the chaotic streets of Sierra Leone's capital. Colourfully dressed women haggle on the pavements over cloths spread with lollipops, razor blades or rice, while a scattering of watchful hale faces marks the return of the first Lebanese traders after eight months in exile.

Only the unusually low number of cars and the occasional heat of burnt rubble testify to the nightmare which Freetown has lived since Koroma and his fellow junior officers seized power from elected President Ahmad Kabbah in May last year. The cars were mostly stolen early on, while the houses were burnt more recently, destroyed by vindictive junta fighters after the Nigerians began advancing on Freetown

sters

"They just went around athouses," said Henry Conteh, a reetown businessman. "They aid if the AFRC [Armed Forces Ruling Council] can't have Freetown then nobody's going to have Freetown."

Conteh was hitching near a Nigerian checkpoint on Main year and a Merry Christmas."



Motor Road: although once prosperous, he too lost his car to the junta fighters.

The general looting of vehicles had ruined his business selling spares. But, he admitted, he felt great. "I am so pleased this thing is over. For so long tacking people and burning now we have lived in the valley of the shadow of death." One of the few remaining embassy officials in town put it another way: "People are so glad these days, you know what they are all saying? They are saying to each other happy new year. Happy new

regimes in Africa than Koroma's eight-month-old military junta, but few, if any, have touched it for naked cynicism and greed. Having ousted President Kabelection, Koroma and his cohorts let it be known that, like an earlier junta of junior officers led by Captain Valentine Strasser, who all did well out of a palace coup in 1992, they felt en-

titled to enrich themselves for

a while at the expense of their already-beggared country. Sierra Leone's internation-

ally respected ambassador to the There have been bloodier UN tried to negotiate with the junta shortly after the coup and emerged, dismayed, to tell journalists that the soldiers' main demand seemed to be a bah less than a year after his large sum of money - later reported to be £30m.

"And," he added, "they want 18 months in office to loot further. That is all they want to do. It is just shameful." Even more shocking to

many was the merger between Sierra Leone's army and the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) announced short-

ly after the coup. This confirmed what many ordinary people had long been alleging: that the bloody civil war which had killed over 20,000 people (nearly all civilians) since 1991 and displaced a third of the 4.5 million population had all along been conducted at the combatants' mutual convenience, to

hearts' content. We saw them all going around Freetown, stealing and killing and raping women," said Abduli Bah, once a favourite

driver for visiting journalists. now bereft without his (stolen) car. "We saw that there was no difference between the RUF and the Sierra Leone army. The only thing was that amongst themselves the RUF maybe had more discipline."

Nigeria's supposedly spontaneous liberation of the embargoed city, officially sparked give both sets of gunmen an opoff by a minor clash at the nearportunity to pillage to their by air-strip of Hastings two weeks ago, was met by cheering crowds. A week later groups of children are still cheering at

The main route of advance from the Nigerian enclave at Hastings shows signs of only the lightest combat. Colonel Maxwell Khobe, commander of the Freetown brigade of Ecomog. a Nigerian-dominated multi-national West African peacekeeping force in Liberia and Sierra Leone, said that the RUF and Sierra Leone Army

organised opposition. 'The rebels didn't fight even when they were better armed and in better bunkers," he told The Independent yesterday. "We

had proved unwilling to resist

Nigerian Ecomog checkpoint in Freetown this week as the city recovers from its occupation by rebels Photograph:

are now moving to clear them

Popperfoto/Reuters

out of the countryside." Despite reports of renewed rebel raids in the central regions around Bo and Kenema the Nigerians say they can finish "mopping up" soon. Several senior junta leaders have already fallen into Ecomog hands and are being held in Freetown until President Kabbah returns to office, possibly some time next week. Koroma himself remains at large, however. According to Colonel Khobe, he was last heard of on Thursday when he unsuccessfully tried to fly from a northern air-strip into neighbouring Liberia.

At least 200 people are believed to have died in the fighting in Freetown alone, although some of these were junta fighters or sympathisers caught and lynched by townspeople. Several hundred more surrendered or were captured.

For the Nigerian officers involved in planning and execut-ing "Opera Sand Storm" last week the public welcome must have come as a pleasant change. Feared and disliked at home as agents of General Sani Abacha's repressive military government, Nigeria's soldiers are banned from travelling in most Western countries, including Britain. The November 1995 execution of dissident writer Ken Saro-Wiwa shocked the international community into imposing limited sanctions against Nigeria.

But the people of Freetown, delighted to be rid of Koroma and his gun-toting thugs, are not inclined to look too hard at their

#### THE INDEPENDENT



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## Single for sake of their careers

A growing band of Nineties women is electing to be single, forsaking all others in favour of their careers. They are thirty somethings, spouse-free and childless, who enjoy their own company and have absorbing careers and strong friendships. They are sceptical about love, and Harpers & Queen calls them the "Lone Rangers." But might there be unforeseen consequences to this new-found freedom?

Dr Catherine Hakim, a sociologist at the London School of Economics, describes them as: "incremental decision makers", women who are constantly reconsidering their options and making their career the priority for another year. "They are constantly postponing, which after a certain passage of time becomes a permanent post-

Just how much successful high-flying Nineties women are prepared to sacrifice was made apparent recently by Rebekah Wade when she was appointed deputy editor of the Sun newspaper at 29. "I think I need to be single [for the job]," she said, on taking up her post. Not so long before that she had called off her engagement to EastEnders actor Ross Kemp. Now she has married her job. Would Piers Morgan, who was made a Murdoch editor at a similarly young age, have made the same decision?

A similar trend in the television industry was highlighted by a 1994 survey of industry executives which found that 70 per cent of women in their thirties were childless, compared with 34 per cent of their male colleagues.

Ms Wade and her media colle typical of a particular generation - the 20 per cent of women born since the 1960s who are expected to choose to remain childless. This is predicted to rise to 30 per cent by 2010. "In Britain childlessness is highest among women who have most to gain from their careers. They have professional, managerial jobs which offer promotions and interesting work. It's not just the great pay," says Dr Hakim.

But when they reach the top of their ladder, by which time it may be too late to rethink their choices, how will they feel? If lucky they will think like Lisa Gernon, 38, chief executive of Cable and Wireless Mobile, who says: "I opted out of the family life and have never regretted it."

Others believe that a career and relationships are incompatible. Nicola Foulston, 27. last year's Veuve Cliquot Businesswoman of the Year, admits that her regular 70-hour weeks were one key reason her marriage did not last longer. "I tried to find a compromise between my marriage and my business life, but it didn't work out."

Annabel Heseltine, 34, journalist and daughter of Michael Heseltine, the former deputy prime minister, is writing a book about thirtysomething single women - of which she is one. Ms Heseltine lives alone in a flat she owns, like an increasing number of women today.

At 24, Ms Heseltine announced she

wanted to travel. "My mother said: 'Darling. don't you want to get married?' I said: Well, yes, but I don't want to hang around and wait for it. It was a very clear decision and that's the philosophy I've followed throughout my life." Ten years on, she is She notices how women, herself in-

cluded, become more picky as about a part-ner as they get older. "You look at them a lot more closely," she said. "You're not mucking around anymore. You're not 22years-old, saying: 'Isn't it fun.' You are not choosing to be single, but you are choosing to be choosy."

According to Angela Giveon, managing editor of Executive Woman magazine: "A lot of women are making the choice to be single because they realise they can't have it all," said Ms Giveor. "They've usually had a failed relationship - not necessarily marriage - when they make this decision. Something is thrown at them like: 'You think of your job more than me,' and they think like a man: 'Sod it, it's not worth

But Ms Heseltine remains confused by the apparent priorities of thirtysomething women. She suspects that they are not "really happy". "There are a lot of women in their thirties who seem to be quite happy about throwing away their chance to reproduce, which is phenomenal. There's the selfish gene; is this the selfish generation? The reality is that we're put onto this

Earth for one reason only and that is to have children. But to deny such a fundamental urge, I don't buy it." So, we fight for the freedom, but do we really want it? To Ms Heseltine all that choice turns into a burden. "For a lot of

women a career justifies them being single. You've had this choice. You want to do these different things. You find yourself single and it's because you have a career." She believes that, in reality, most of her peers will be married by 40. "It's just taking them a long time to work it out. They are doing the questioning which a previ-

ous generation would have done when their children had grown up before they are even married." But even when the right man does comes along, it is not all done and dust-



Photograph: Emma Boam

against the wall in your mid-forties. In reality, it is six months to a year before you're married. Do you really want to get pregnant the second you are married? Then you need time to try. So you're talking three years. It could all go wrong. The relationship could break up; you may not be able

to have children that easily. Cristina Odone, 37, author and television critic, would like to have children, but does not regret for a minute the choices she has made to date. Unlike Ms Heseltine, she regards careers as assisting women in fulfilling themselves. "I know I would be just as unhappy were I to jettison my writing as to wake up one day and

realise I missed the boat as regards childbirth," she says.

However, one incident - a real eyeopener" - has stuck in Ms Odone's mind. "I went for professional advice to a woman who is a literary lioness," she recalls. "I was writing my first novel. She just looked at me and said: 'Just make sure that you don't pass up the chance of having a child. It's my one regret.' It was incredibly poignant and it really did alarm me."

"Some of the most interesting and accomplished women of my age who have foregone the baby option have all regretted it, without one exception. Really, really famous household names. They are all

self-styled feminists, self-styled career women, and are all hailed as success stories. Yet, they've all said in private: 'There's one thing I regret..."

Between the age of 30 and 34, Ms Odone edited the Catholic Herald newspaper; she made a conscious decision not to settle down and have children at that time. "I was so wrapped up in work. I would have either resented the child or cheated on the work. I didn't want to do either. I don't regret that because I still feel I could have children. It's too early to regret. Now I think I could definitely balance work, which is writing at home, with a child. But hey, where's the husband?"

## They're just men behaving successfully

The vast majority of successful men in their 30s or older are married. That doesn't mean they don't envy an ambitious colleague who, unencumbered by wife and children, can devote himself to his career 16 hours a day or more. Highly successful single men don't have to rush home to spend "quality time" with their families.

There was a time when any single man who wanted to succeed in business, politics, showbusiness or even sport was severely handicapped until he found a wife. This was because of the fear of being considered homosexual. Even if you were truly a "confirmed bachelor", it certainly wasn't acceptable in many corporate cultures where climbing the ladder depended on your conforming to an explicit middle-class social stereotype that included a wife (who didn't work), two kids, a house in the sub-

urbs, a dog and a cat. As society has changed its attitude towards homosexuality and as single women have flooded the workforce, it has become increasingly acceptable for a man to forgo a family in order to concentrate entirely

While today most men still choose the on his career. comforts and support of a traditional monogamous relationship (in 1998, this can include a monogamous homosexual relationship), far fewer men get married in their early or mid-twenties than was the case 50 years ago. It's not simply wanting to enjoy their bachelor freedom longer, or Generation X's so-called "fear of commitment", but a rational desire to establish a firm economic foundation before taking on a life partner and embarking on parenthood.

Moreover, what young media executive doesn't envy, for example, Andrew Neil's freedom to pursue a career that includes being editor-in-chief of four Barclay Brothers' publications (the Scotsman, Scotland on Sunday, the European and Sunday Business), a chat show host on both the BBC and ITV, director of Mohamed Al Fayed's Liberty Publishing group (Punch, Liberty Radio) and a contributing editor of Vanity Fair - all this plus nights in Tramp in the company of various pretty young women.

Other highly successful single men today include:

John Browne - chief executive of BP; Michael Dobson – chairman of Morgan Grenfell: Peter Mandelson - Minister without Portfolio; Gordon Brown -Chancellor of the Exchequer; Michael Bloomberg - financial information tycoon; Geoffrey Boycott - cricketer; Dickie Bird cet umpire; David Geffen - Hollywood mogul; partner at Dreamworks.

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Singular success: David Geffen

#### ed. "You don't want to have your back A little of a good thing can be wonderful. Can't it? that they have seen abroad." my pregnancy and I think that

Nobody knows if wine is bad for you, it seems. That's just as well because we're drinking more of it than ever. Kate Watson-Smyth sips the facts

ing after the night before. So how much did you drink last night? A couple of glasses of wine in the interests of preventing heart disease, or more than half a bottle which, if you are a woman, dramatically increases the risk of cancer. Or were you so confused by the conflicting messages that you drank several bottles to help you forget about the whole thing?

Research published this week purports to show that two or three glasses of wine a day can significantly reduce the risk of cancer. Strange that, A similar study put out earlier in the week carried the message that women who drink between two and five glasses a day will increase the risk of breast can-

It doesn't take a scientist to deduce that the advice has never been more contradictory,

IT'S SATURDAY - the morn- in the throes of a passionate love affair with the grape. In the past 30 years, wine consumption has soared by more than 450 per cent, while it has only doubled in America and has (believe it or not) fallen by half in France.

One reason, say vintners, is that Britain does not have its own wine culture and that other wine-producing countries have seized the opportunity to create a new market.

Alex Ignatieff, wine buyer at Harvey Nicholls, goes so far as to say that Britain has become the wine capital of the world. "The main reason for this is the emergence of New World wines, which have been aggressively marketed in this country.

"Wine sellers in places like Uruguay were faced with two choices - either to try and persuade the great aunt to give up but despite that, the British are her pink gin in favour of wine,



or to try and create a new market. They went for the latter and have made a market out of nothing. There is a much greater choice of wine in this country than anywhere else in the world because we do not have a mature wine industry and so the market has exploded." Further testament to our

growing taste for wine is tak-

ing shape beneath the Cannon Street railway viaduct on the south bank of the Thames. By this time next year, the vast expanse of vaulted arches will be transformed into Vinopolis, a "City of Wine", no less. The focal point of Vinopolis will be an "interactive" tour

through 20 themed pavilions

covering the main wine pro-

trip round the Italian section, for example, will allow visitors to take simulated tours of Italy's wine country while sitting on a Vespa.

Tony Hodges, director of Wineworld, who came up with the plan for Vinopolis and leased the 100,000-sq-ft space from Railtrack, says one rea-

ducing regions of the world. A son that wine has become so popular is that people are better educated and more widely travelled.

"Historically, wine was an aspirational drink for the gentry and the City but because of its availability in supermarkets, everyone drinks it now." he says, "People travel more and they want to try the wines

The retailers have been quick to cash in on the growing taste for wine. Specialist off-licences, Victoria Wine and

Thresher for example, each

have around of 1,500 stores across the country. But the real story has been the rise of the supermarkets. Safeway, which stocks more than 500 wines, says that at the bottles are sold in a super-

moment seven out of every 10 market, compared with fewer than four just a decade ago. According to a spokeswoman for the store: "Palates are becoming much more sophisticated and drinking as an everyday habit has become much more acceptable."

But what are we to make of the health risks, particularly for those who are indulging in a glass or three every day?

Caroline Stacey, the food editor of Time Out magazine, says she distrusts much of the research. "It seems to me that scientists come out with a different message every day and you never quite know how reliable their studies are. I really don't think people should take that much notice. I drank wine in moderation all through

science is just used as a way of justifying puritanism." Jason Rabinowitz, a re-

search manager at the Design Council and lover of fine wines, is similarly dismissive of the health warnings. "If I read something that says wine is good for me then I will take notice of that but if I see an article saying it's bad then I tend to ignore it." he says.

Sir Richard Doll, a leading consultant at the Cancer Studies Unit for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Britain's most famous medical researcher, has concluded that alcohol in moderation is good for you. "I can see no reason whatsoever for thinking that wine drinking would reduce the risk of cancer," he says.

"The benefit of alcohol is in the prevention of heart disease. but that is only for those over the age of 45. However, it is quite clear that there is an allover benefit in moderate consumption and two drinks a day are good for you."

So with that cheerful thought in mind, perhaps it's time to nip down to the pub for a lunch-time glass - strictly medicinal of course.

المكذا من الاصل



More Titipu than Nagasaki: Liping Zhang as Butterfly, Craig Downes as Pinkerton

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

## Not a dry eye in the house?

For his new 'Butterfly', David Freeman has flooded the Albert Hall but failed to tap the wellsprings of emotion.

Edward Seckerson could have wept at the waste.

Water, water, everywhere... The advance publicity promised it, and Raymond Gubbay duly delivered it - all 15,000 gallons of it - to the Royal Albert Hall arena. There hasn't been this much fuss about flooding in the capital since before the advent of the Thames barrier. But there it was, pretty as a picture postcard, a package holiday brochure, the way the West will always see it, the way Lieutenant BF Pinkerton saw it one small corner of the "floating island" that is for ever Uncle Sam. Director David Freeman and his designer David Roger have plucked their Madam Butterfly straight from the Hollywood back-lot. It has the look, the feel, the rosy glow of a studio set from the days when Technicolor was still a novelty. You half expect the spirit of Esther Williams to surface from amidst the ornamental rocks and walkways and smile benevolently upon the whole enterprise.

But that, presumably, was the point: to isolate, to maroon Butterfly somewhere between her own culture and the West's perception of it. So the detail is lovingly precise, the kimonos enchanting, the blossom fresh every day. But we're closer to Gilbert & Sullivan's Titipu than to real-life Nagasaki. So this is a sham, an illusion, a fantasy - like Pinkerton's love for Butterfly. So David Freeman has something devastating up his sleeve for Act 2? Or not.

Returning after the interval, a time-lapse of three long years during which time Butterfly's hopes and finances have begun to dry up, we discover that - surprise, surprise - the water has, too. The water garden has become a Zen Buddhist stone garden, its austerity - or so the programme note insists

- a stern reminder of the religion which But-terfly abandoned but which will now reclaim her. A stern reminder? But nothing else has changed. Butterfly's linle house is still pretty as a picture, still festooned in fresh blossom, still bathed in that rosy glow (courtesy of lighting designer Andrew Bridge).

Nor has the attitude of the production changed. A change of tone, a sharper sense of reality - less artificial, less prissily "operatic" in its conceits - could suddenly have turned the evening on its head and delivered the body blow that some of us were convinced was only a scene-change away. Was this really the work of the same David Freeman whose innovative Opera Factory took opera out of the closet and showed it (and the operatic establishment) real life? Or did some clause in his contract preclude telling it like it really is?

All right, to be fair, it's a perfectly serviceable, if ultimately rather bland and somewhat "distanced" realisation of the opera. It understands its space and moves efficiently within it, wisely radiating as little as possible from the central focus of Butterfly's "floating world". When it does so - as in the pointless circling of the arena that so fatally disturbs the still centre of the love duet - it flounders. But the setpieces function well enough. Butterfly's entrance duly works its picturesque charm, though some confusion might arise from the fact that her relations arrive at roughly the same time as the first batch of latecomers. There are a lot of them, of course (relations, that is), and Freeman has them dutifully assemble for the wedding photo - a nice touch, that, right down to the ripple of disquiet over the powder-flash. Would that there had been more where that kind of detail came from. All credit to Freeman, though, for getting the child, Sorrow. so right. The little sailor suit was a chilling touch, the golden hair (for this was indeed a miniature Pinkerton) hidden from view until Butterfly removes his hat proudly to display it. In the final scene, Sorrow is draped in the American flag to shield his eyes from his mother's honourable discharge. The final ignominy.

Now, if the cast had all sounded as good as they looked, the evening might yet have caught our emotions off guard. Craig 589 8212

Downes was a frankly second-rate Pinkerton, easier in manner than voice, and quite without that ability to open up and sustain confidently, suavely, at the top. Whatever else Pinkerton does or doesn't have, a ringing top register is a prerequisite. Keith Latham's Sharpless was good, though, an ample, bluff, suitably weathered vocal colour (better with the words than most). and Marcia Bellamy, while not exactly a scene-stealing Suzuki, found the humanity wherever she could. So did Liping Zhang's touching Butterfly. This promising young Chinese soprano is central casting's answer to the role, a pretty and wholly believable figurine with plenty of voice (though "sound enhancement" - otherwise known as radio-miking - makes it hard to tell just how much) and the heart to make it count. Her problems (and I'm presuming that the odd lapses in intonation - desperate on her first entrance - were down to hearing impairment in this difficult, farflung space) have more to do with technique than spirit. A good performance could yet become an excellent one if her instinct could be matched with her ability to fine-tune and support phrasing beyond the point where rapture and pathos really begin. Even so, the passion, the resolve of her top notes, the inwardness and concentration of stage presence were not to be taken lightly. Alas, Amanda Holden's brand-new English translation was not

money well-spent where she was concerned. The sound of Gubbay's "opera for the people" is improving all the time, though the people should be advised that there is no substitute for the unvarnished, unamplified truth - particularly where operatic voices are concerned. Sound designer Bobby Aitken did a good job here on the BBC Concert Orchestra under Peter Robinson, extending the reach, beefing up the opulence to Dolby Stereo levels without it sounding so. In fact, this was easily the best of Gubbay's operatic ventures to date, even if one did still leave with the distinct feeling that David Freeman had been neutered.

To Sunday 1 March, Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7. Booking: 0171-

are resistant to change - a line wheeled remember when it was all trees round here"; out regularly by the BBC when announc- or perhaps it's a purely local phenomenon, tance to change were so firmly rooted in human nature, then we'd still be hanging around the Olduvai Gorge sneering at this trendy stone-tool rubbish and pining for the good old days, when people lived in

trees and kids showed some respect. But if small-c conservatism isn't necessarily part of the human condition, it may well be part of our condition, here and now.

It's a well-known factoid (looks like a fact, It could be a global change, a reaction to smells like a fact, isn't true) that people the century that invented the phrase."I can ing schedule changes. Of course, if resis- a reaction not to change pure and simple.

but to injudicious, cocked-up change. At any rate, this is the lesson you could draw from two programmes on Radio 4 this week. In Why Did We Do That? on Thursday, Chris Bowlby investigated the mania for urban motorways that laid waste so many towns and cities in the Sixties and Seventies; and on Friday morning the architect Maxwell Hutchinson began a six-

#### THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

part series. Back to the Drawing Board, on the impact his profession has had on Britain over the past 50 years.

One thing both programmes made clear was that change was welcomed enthusiastically by many people - bus companies ran tourist trips to admire the Preston bypass. And the demolition of slums in favour of clean, modern council estates was not

the imposition of a socialist utopia. Young architects often had an idealistic streak dreams of building Le Corbusier's Radiant City - but they had a counter-balancing realism: as Hutchinson put it, you might have Veronica Lake pinned to your drawing-board, but you still loved your wife. Sadly, they were building in a hurry, with little firm knowledge of how modern materials

would react to new living arrangements, Court be replaced by a 14-lane motorway. such as high-rise blocks.

Bowlby's diagnosis of the trouble with because it isn't his profession, perhaps because town-planners had fewer excuses. Certainly it's hard to see the counter-balancing realism in Birmingham's dream that "tree-lined parkways" would help transform it into one of Europe's most beautiful cities. Luckily, the wave of urban road-building broke against London, the planners admitting defeat when computer projec-

would behave over time, or how people tions of traffic flow suggested that Earls

These sharply argued, well-made programmes offered nicely contrasted views of road-building was less sympathetic, perhaps closely related subjects. This was probably mere accident, though, and could easily have been another example of the BBC failing to find new ideas, or remember the old ones. This week had a good example: a Radio 3 series on spa-towns called Taking the Waters, admirably complementing last year's Radio 2 feature on the same subject with the same title. And you thought the BBC was interested in novelty for its own sake.

## Yes we have no arts policy

One of the most significant events in the arts this week went completely unpublicised. unreported and unheard. Actually, that's not quite fair. A room full of people did bear this talk on the future of arts policy in England; but they heard it in Scotland, where it will not apply, so they don't fully count.

The talk was given by Graham Devlin, his inaugural lecture as honorary professor of the Scottish Centre for Cultural Policy and Management at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh. Mr Devlin is deputy general secretary of the Arts Council of England, and for nearly a year has been acting secretary general - in other words, running the show. So his words repay some study. I was, of course, happy to hear him using some of his inaugural lecture to endorse The Independent's campaign for tax breaks for people who give to the arts. Let's hope that Edinburgh University alumnus Gordon Brown pays attention to honorary professors in

I also enjoyed the diversion of his reminiscences about the Arts Council's more controversial funding decisions. Who would want to forget the legendary two men walking round East Anglia with poles on their heads (funded by the Experimental Projects Committee)? Who would want to remember Throbbing Gristle's exhibition of Miss Cosie Fanny Tutti's soiled un-But Mr Devlin's talk was of Devlin, should be slimmed arts policy that encompasses ing in more punters. derwear at the ICA?

#### A WEEK IN THE ARTS DAVID LISTER

Arts Council. They were, he was there in a personal capacity and nothing he said should be taken as official policy. And he would say that, wouldn't he? Me. I disclaim all

particular interest for his down and should give more thoughts on the future of the thought to funding individuals as well as companies and stressed, personal thoughts, he buildings. And about time too. The premise that we cannot fund individuals has led to some ludicrous anomalies over the years. We managed to lose a talent like the director



such disclaimers. I'm content to believe that the man who has administered the Arts Council for the past year, and actually continues to do so for another month, is projecting more than a few personal whims. What we got in that Edinburgh lecture theatre was a snapshot of how the arts will be run in the future. The new Council, says Mr

building.

sumably because he was not a Devlin goes on to say that the new slimmed-down Council should be responsible for the overall distribution of funding for the arts (although not necessarily doing much itself in the way of individual grant-giving) and for undertaking research and devising

Peter Brook to France, pre-

the wider cultural industries and the commercial sector, it should also stand up as a powerful advocate for the arts.

Well, one could argue that

it should have been doing most of this already. But let's not be picky. This future role as a policy body, with the regions distributing funds locally, makes some sense, and might save the Council from abolition by an increasingly sceptical government. The successes of Adventures in Motion Pictures and others in the West End show that the subsidised and commercial sectors are closely linked. And the public never differentiates between them anyway. A national cultural strategy should embrace both.

Most pleasing was a sentence in Devlin's speech which said that the Council should put subsidy into seat-pricing structures which "make the arts affordable for the majority of people, and not just a well-heeled élite". At last, a glimmer of recognition that price determines access, and that the best thing a subsidy body can do is to bring down ticket prices. The effect could not be better illustrated than by the sell-out success of Raymond Gubbay's cut-price but stunning Madam Butterfly now playing at the Royal Albert Hall (and reviewed above). Bringing ticket prices down, making transport to arts events safer and more efficient: these are things rarely discussed by funding bodies. But they are crucial to bring-

ur expedition cruise aboard the ideally suited 'Professor Multanovsky' will take us from Aberdeen to Oban on an island odyssey to inaccessible places of great natural beauty, rich wildlife and mystical history. With just 40 or so like-minded souls we will sail to seldom visited islands on the fringes of the Orkney and Shetland groups - Copinsay, Fair Isle, Mousa, the Out Skerries and Foula and then head for the Hebrides and such gems as the World Heritage Site of St Kilda, North

Rona and Canna. This unique voyage will appeal to those who wish to visit some of the remotest islands of the kingdom and see some of its extraordinary, prolific seabird life. Explore the shores for grey and common seals and the cliffs for puffins and gannets, walk amongst the ruins of past habitation and enjoy the peace and spectacular scenery which has changed little in centuries.

THE PROFESSOR MULTANOVSKY Built in Finland for the former Soviet Union's programme of polar and oceanographic research, she has been refurbished for expeditionary travel. The Multanovsky is a comfortable and well equipped vessel, accommodating a maximum of 48 passengers.

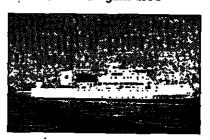
All passenger accommodation has outside views and you can choose between a two berth cabin with shower and toilet or a two bedded cabin with shared facilities.

Public areas include a lounge/bar with library, single sitting dining room, clinic, sauna, and an 'open' bridge where passengers are free to visit at most times. The hearty and excellent meals are supervised by European staff.

Looking after the day to day programme on board will be the expedition leader and the ream. There will be no formal entertainment, but the expedition team will organise briefings and illustrated talks. For our forays ashore we will use the vessel's Zodiac craft allowing us great flexibility.



A Nine Day Exploration of the Northern Isles & the Hebrides Aboard the 'Professor Multanovsky' 7th to 15th June 1998 15th to 23rd June 1998\*



THE ITINERARY We expect to explore and land on a number of remote islands, taking advantage of weather conditions to use our time to maximum effect. We hope to achieve the

Aberdeen. Embark 'Prof. Multanovsky' in the afternoon and sail. The expedition will introduce the team and outline the

voyage plans. Copinsay. To the east of Orkney and Scapa Flow are the tiny islands of cruise the mile-long cliffs with their

spectacular birdlife. Fair Isle. Laying claim to be the most isolated inhabited isle in the UK. Here we can stretch our legs on an island walk, perhaps visiting the Bird Observatory and searching out the puffin slopes. The any population of 50 or so islanders always extend a warm welcome. Mousa. South of Lerwick is the

uninhabited island of Mousa. Hopefully, we should see basking common and grey seals and otters. Here we will also see one of the best examples of a Broch (fortified

Foula. South west of Shetland lies Foula, home to thousands of aules, guillemors, puffins and kittiwakes, breeding on a breathtakingly high cliff, known as the Noup. In the island's ponds we will look for rednecked phalaropes and redthroated divers. The colonies of Arctic skuas and great skuas are

amongst the largest in the North Atlantic. North Rona. Our first landfall in the Hebrides will be the lovels; lonely island of North Rona. Here we may find leach's petrels nesting and nearby colonies of great black-backed gulls, great skuas and pulfins. This is also a breeding ground for grey seals. In the evening we circumnavigate Sula Sger with its thousands of gannets.

St Kilda. Remote and spectacular, the St Kilda archipelago is home to vast numbers of seabirds. Weather permitting we will go ashore by Zodiac to Hirta, where the village which was deserted by the islanders in 1930 is now being restored by the National Trust for Scotland. Circumnavigate Boreray and the stacks.

Canna. Here, on this National Trust for Scotland property, we will enjoy coastal walks, looking for shorebirds, golden and white-tailed eagles and peregrine falcons. Oban. Arrive in the morning and disembark after breakfast.

Prices range from £995 per person sharing a three bedded cabin (with shared facilities) to £1795 per person in a suite. Single cabins from £1695

\* Sails in reverse order from Oban to Abendeen

FOR FURTHER DETAILS Please telephone 0171-409 0376 (7 days a week during office froms).

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Mmm, what's up, Doc? What is up, you. long-eared pyjama sack, is that some of us Europeans have had enough of your homogenised American culture infiltrating our precious heritage and want to put a stop to it. As we report today, the Netherlands government wants to impose a quota on concerts, reserving 7 per cent of performing time for the work of Dutch composers.

This is only the latest instance in a long tradition of cultural protectionism, much of which is primarily a reaction against American dominance, Cultural protectionism is particularly strong in Canada, a country with a national psyche largely defined by its relationship with its massive, and massively vulgar, neighbour. It has controls on magazine publishing and quotas for popular music on the radio as well as pop videos on television. The purpose is not explicitly to build a dyke against a tide of American pap, but to foster "world-beating talent" of Canada's own. As if Neil Young and the Cowboy Junkies needed subsidy to succeed (and ask not who the Cowboy Junkies might be: Sir Jeremiah Harman, the "out-of-touch judge", has just been sacked for less).

On the other side of the Atlantic, France has been the most enthusiastic builder of ramparts to preserve its own cultural purity. It was France which led the failed initiative to require half of all television broadcasting in the European Union to be European-made. It was France which took the global free-trade negotiations, Gatt, to the brink because it insisted on - and eventually obtained special treatment for its film and television industries.

And it is France which is now leading the charge against the attempt to liberalise cross-border investment in the 29 rich countries in the OECD club. Earlier this week, French film-makers demonstrated in Paris in support of the minister of culture, who is resisting a ban on discrimination against foreign investors. This would outlaw French attempts to protect their own film industry, and amounts to an American attack on French "cultural identity", according to Jean-Jacques Beineix, director of Betty Blue.

It is easy for us to sneer at French defensiveness. We like to think Franglais is funny, and to adopt an air of superiority about the ability of English to absorb words from French - and many other languages. But we speak a dialect of American, after all, and can share much more easily both in Disney fantasy and in Hollywood drama without being constantly aware that it is foreign. Despite our knee-jerk anti-

Americanism, we consume American culture avidly, and our lives have been greatly enriched by it. Continental Europeans are mocked by history, too, in that the creative spark of the Californian film industry was exported from Europe, largely by Russian Jewish émigrés.

But language, the substructure of

culture, is a sensitive subject. French, once the lingua franca of an empire, now cringes before the global pervasiveness of polyglot English. The Dutch - the very name by which they are known to us marginalises them as an adjunct of die Deutschen - speak a frail and pasteurised compromise between English and German, in both of which they are often also fluent.

The United Kingdom has long accepted that special measures of legal protection and taxpayer subsidy are justified for a language such as Welsh. But it is a long step from preserving and promoting a language to drawing up quotas for cultural products. And this is where we must take issue with the Dutch government's decree.

However much our knees might jerk in sympathy with the protection of national cultural autonomy, this kind of crude quota must be rejected. It is as doomed in the cultural sphere as it is in the international trading of widgets. Cultural quotas open the authorities to ridicule and their effects will be counter-productive. Already opponents claim that the fact that composers can be considered "Dutch" if they have made a "long-term and significant contribution to Dutch music" could let in Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Mahler. Getting around the 3 per cent

quota reserved for living Dutch composers - those who have not yet popped their clogs - is a tougher assignment. Theo Verbey is the name cited by the Dutch Composers' Society in defence of the quota system: newcomers like him "need the opportunity to have their work heard". Perhaps, but do concert-goers need the opportunity to be forced to hear it? Such a requirement would lead to riots in the stalls in this country, being interpreted as an edict for the compulsory playing of Harrison Birtwhistle.

Quotas are bound to be abused. Apparently Marcel Poot, a Belgian composer, owes his fame to the fact that he once composed a piece which is just five minutes long - popular with Belgian orchestras entitled to extra state funding if they play a Belgian composition on foreign

We are not opposed to official support for all forms of art and culture - on the contrary, we are campaigning for the Government to do more. But we are against this kind of Pooterism. In a free society with (despite some imperfections in the markets for newspapers and satellite television) free media, people should be allowed to see, hear and buy whatever art turns them on, wherever it comes

#### Childcare tax breaks

THE Government makes much of its commitment to a national childcare strategy, but I fail to see how any system implemented can be fair and workable until it is focused on every working mother in this country, rather than just on those who are most needy or at the lowest end of the pay scale.

Labour's efforts to improve: childcare provision as part of its! New Deal programme are commendable. But the majority of mothers with children are not claiming benefit. Many millions of us have paid into the tax and benefits system for years, only to find that as soon as we decide to start a family, the doors of state support are closed to us.

How can a system which willingly taxes women when they are childless and commitmentfree, but which refuses to give them anything in return when they are most in need of sup-

If this government is to retain the crucial support of female voters, it must look at ways of recognising the vast economic contribution made by working mothers, and examine workable incentives to those who wish to return to work after childbirth and continue contributing to the Treasury through the tax system. The Independent's suggestion of an £1,800 tax credit is an excellent

LJ WRIGHT London N22

I AM delighted to see you have started a campaign to help working mothers like myself. I work as a researcher for an MP, and although I love my job, it is actually costing me money to work. Because I work long hours and my son is not yet at school, childcare absorbs all my after-tax income. A small amount of Family Credit is left

There are many people working in Parliament, who aren't MPs, who are likely to need workplace childcare (report, 19 February), and subsidised childcare at that. There are surveys sent out once in a while to try and determine the demand for a nursery in Parliament. So far they have demonstrated that there is not enough demand to justify a nursery. But surely that's because parents who would need it are not here to be surveyed - because they have difficulty arranging or affording childcare. EMMA THORPE

Thames Ditton, Surrey

implied in not returning a call from Fran Abrams to comment on a campaign for childcare in the House of Commons house", 19 February), may I say that I both support the campaign and returned her call.

I believe that affordable quality childcare is crucial in providing equal opportunities in the workplace and the House of Commons is no exception. Over 1500 staff work in and around the House of Commons and I hope that we can set an example to other employers by practising family friendly policies. I



port be a just one?

love story of this century. were a couple who lived and campaign by various trade unions representing staff of the to cover all my other living costs. House of Commons and I will continue to do so.

RUTH KELLY MP (Bolton West, Lab) House of Commons HARRIET HARMAN'S response (19 February) to your campaign is very disappointing. Instead of allowing us to spend our own money on whatever childcare arrangement we deem suitable, she is offering a national childcare strategy devised by politicians and implemented by 'childcare workers". For families with several small children, such as mine, no institutionalised childcare

FAR from the sinister motives ("No room for children in the

perative for me to work. The solution put forward by The Independent has the advantage that it allows people to devise their own childcare strategy whether it means nurseries. neighbourhood childminding or nannies from Australia. rather than rely on Nanny Harman to do it for them. MARIANNE OGUBOYE have given my full support to the London SW19



End of a love story THE sale in New York of the household and personal effects of the late Duke and Duchess of Windsor is a historic and poignantly sad occasion - it is the final chapter to the truest

The Duke and Duchess

arrangement can be suitable.

Having someone live-in has

us, although I have to spend half

of my income on childcare. My

husband's income is nearly all

spent on the mortgage (we pay

£120 more since Labour came

to power), which makes it im-

and I came to know them in France after they had lived many years in exile. In February 1972 the American Hospital of Paris where I was nursing at the time, asked me to take special charge of the Duke of Windsor after his exploratory

loved and faced their destiny, criticised, but in my view it was see that his courage in illness

ness. If he plans to draw a and one which contributed at

pension of any kind, it will be least equally to the outbreak of

Dresden, Hiroshima and Viet- history, not just convenient se-

nam, our politicians continue to lections from it.

The Duchess was severely

20 February) displays an all-too-

common form of shortsighted-

other people's children who

support him after his retirement.

WHAT a barbaric century this

has been, with governments

throughout the world deciding

that it was permissible to

slaughter unarmed people to

further their aims. In spite of

cling to the bombing option.

United Nations to consider the problem of war against civilian

the point where the defenceless

now suffer the most, while the

military is largely eccooned from

the worst effects of its actions.

culture of thought in the Unit-

ed Nations that outlaws

blitzkrieg tactics. The major

powers should decide, as an in-

ternational principle, that the

bombing of one nation by an-

other is never to be regarded as

a final "diplomatic" option.

JOHN EVANS

Cambridge

We must strive to produce a

This is a suitable time for the

SAIRA SALIMI

London W10

Gulf crisis

proved a workable solution for populations. We have reached

part, then through genuine love developed with landslide speed into a major monarchy crisis.

tory, have judged the Duke of Windsor and found him want-

ALASTAIR MEEKS (letter, appeasing a ruthless dictator, damage" on Iraq, I again won-

Another mistake of history we

would do well not to forget ~

war in Europe in 1939 - is the

dictated peace of the Treaty of

Versailles. This taught us that

it is short-sighted and danger-

ous to humiliate and ruin a

more hard lessons than most in

the history of conflict and con-

flict resolution across the world,

not least of all in Iraq itself. Let

us draw on this experience and

really learn the lessons of our

THE 1991 photograph of the

immolation of the retreating

Iraqi convoy on the road to Bas-

ra stands as an arresting image

of the brutality and borror of

war. A US soldier, on viewing

that carnage, remarked that

this had been brought about "by

the madness of one man". I

wasn't sure then to whom he was

Post letters to Letters to the Editor

WE are being urged not to re- E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.

peat the mistakes of history by Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

and include a daytime telephone number.

The British have been taught

proud nation.

Dr PAUL O'PREY

I know the world, and hising as a public figure; but I knew him as a private man. I came to the Duchess gave me a gift, a London SW5

a relationship which started out was as staunch as his courage in as an innocent interest on her love. He was generous and never complained of the pain of illness or the pain of exile.

The depth of the Duchess's love was enduring. When I arrived at their home in the Bois de Boulogne to nurse him there after his release from hospital

der where the madness lies.

Dr MALCOLM MORRISON

Landmine campaign

I HAVE not "quit" the Inter-

national Campaign to Ban

Landmines (report, 13 Febru-

ary). Nor am I keeping my

share of the Nobel money for

personal use. As of the end of

February, I will no longer accept

a salary, benefits or expenses

from the campaign. I will use the

sure of doing my job.

Edinbureh

brooch of the smallest carnation in the world designed by the Duke and made by Cartier "to

thank me for bringing the Duke safely home". Now with no earthly collection of possessions left we must pray they are both safely home.

OONAGH SHANLEY-TOFFOLO

Washington.

It is inaccurate to say that VVAF funds much of the campaign's work. Various members of the campaign, such as Human Rights Watch, Handicap International of France and Belgium, the UK Working Group on Landmines and the Cambodia Campaign, have contributed as many human and financial resources as has VVAF to our international work. In fact, the bulk of VVAF's staff and financial resources have gone to lobbying efforts in

The international campaign Nobel money, one half of which goes to US taxes, for the plcais already pressing all 123 govcriments that have signed the I am no longer with the treaty to ratify it as soon as pos-Vietnam Veterans of America sible. We will continue our Foundation (VVAF). In June of work to universalise the treaty, last year, VVAF began to pubrecognising the importance of licly state its intention to greathaving all countries sign. The ly diminish its involvement or campaign simply put its early withdraw entirely from the inemphasis on those countries alternational side of the campaign ready seriously contaminated after the treaty was signed this with mines - such as Cambodia, past December in Ottawa, and Angola, Bosnia, Croatia, to focus on the US. When the Mozambique, all of which have VVAF decided to abruptly tersigned the treaty. Bringing the minate our relationship, I was US on hoard has always been immediately reaffirmed as copart of the strategy of the camreferring, and now, seven years ordinator of the ICBL by the paign - along with Russia, Chion, when I hear our Defence other 10 members of the camna, India and Pakistan, for example. The major difference with VVAF has simply been one of timing and focus, JODY WILLIAMS Co-ordinator, ICBL

Alexandria, Virginia

Laureate for Peace

The writer is 1997 Nubel

Established by God

DESPITE what Paul Vallely

writes ("Established values". 19 February), the issue of the establishment, or possible disestablishment, of the Church of England, is not one which exercises the minds of clergy or laity a great deal: it is sometimes a nuisance, but otherwise all but irrelevant. The state regards us as established when it is convenient for it to do so, but when it comes to the paying of VAT. we are a private organisation.

I do what I do because I am a priest of a Christian church. My local church does what it does because it is part of the worldwide church, not because of any notional link with the state. And we do what we do in collaboration, not competition, with the other

churches in the area. My job is to attempt to be a or to anyone, good, bad or indifferent, living in my parish: the job of my church is to open its doors and be available to them, come what may. We don't need to be established by the state to do that: our establishment is older than England itself. JOHN WILLIAMS

Rector of West Wittering and Birdham with Itchenor West Wittering, West Sussex

#### Paying for the arts

ANDREAS Whittam Smith's argument that "the best way to save the arts is to remove the single payer" (17 February) papers over a number of cracks.

He is incorrect to suggest that most arts organisations rely overwhelmingly on a single funder. This is not the case for many organisations who already put together a patchwork of income from many sources, including the Arts Council or regional arts boards, local authorities, businesses, box office and private giving. Whilst the loss of one of these sources would be damaging, it

would not necessarily be fatal. Second, he assumes that, having plotted its demise, a culture of philanthropy towards the arts would spring up to carry the coffin of the Arts Council. I suspect that he is too optimistic. Whilst a number of Britain's larger arts institutions have indeed tapped HOWARD INGRAM into private giving, they have the

strength of being highly visible, national organisations which can offer a great deal to their donors in the form of kudos. Many less well-resourced companies might soon find themselves face down in the malmsey.

Smaller organisations cannot compete in terms of prising open the wallets of the wealthy. Their clients might be the young, the unemployed, the disabled. They may operate on a local level, so that much of their work is unseen. Or they may produce experimental work. All useful, necessary and notentially of very high quality. but just not "sexy" enough to attract private giving. They would consider life without public subsidy as being very unfair indeed. ROD BIRTLES General Manager

Milton Keynes City Orchestra

#### Jobs for the bands

AS someone who has worked as a roadie and a tour manager. I find the views expressed by Alan McGee, the director of Creation Records, totally wrong (report, 18 February).

The musicians who are most productive are engaged in some sort of employment. They can relate to everyday life and also afford to tour. They are able to spend more money on decent rehearsal facilities and a recording studio, and on professional advice and equipment.

A look at any listings magazine will show how many bands are trying to "make it" at any given time. Very few will make it to become household names. Why doesn't the Government bring in a loan system, as they have for students, so that musicians may return the money paid to support them, when they become rich? CRDHAYES London N2

#### Posse of preachers

GRAHAM DON suggests (letter, 19 February) a posse of missionaries be sent to Northern Ireland. The last thing Northern Ireland needs is more preachers. A posse to round up the existing ones seems a more attractive proposition. Belfast

#### QUOTE UNQUOTE

"If Mo Mowlam has a fault it is that she can sometimes come into a room without opening the door first - Neil Kinnock, Euro-Commissioner.

"I sat behind Brigitte Bardot once in a restaurant, but the lady friend I was with wouldn't let me turn round to look at her."-- the Marquis of Bath.

"Sweat is holy water, pearls of liquid that release your past, an ancient form of self-healing. The more you sweat the more you pray. The more you pray the closer you come to ecstasy" - Gabrielle Roth, guru of "the trance dance".

"Ah, so God finally caught his cyc" -- George S Kaufmann, American playwright, on being told that the imperious head waiter of one of his favourite restaurants had died.

"When I want an idea I have a bath, and it just comes. By the time I go into rehearsals I'm very clean" - Edward Hall, director at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

"I like to think of myself as an artist with a capital A"

Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk

Secretary threatening "massive paign's steering committee.

That is The

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#### DAVID **AARONOVITCH** SCRIBBLERS AGAINST THE GULF WAR

It is regrettable that this newspaper, unlike the Daily Telegraph and the New Statesman, failed to publish the recent stirring letter protesting against the forthcoming war against Iraq, and written by a collective called Media Workers Against The War. The signatories included two comedians, a novelist, two Guardian columnists, the editor of the Modern Review and Paul Foot. As an old left-winger myself I wish that they had asked me to sign it too. The name is a good one; anything with the word "Worker" in it still makes me feel agreeably militant. And "Comedians And Columnists Against The War" doesn't have quite the same associative force.

Pointing out that the last Gulf war "was not a war at all, but a slaughter", the Media Workers make an impassioned plea that we should not lend credence to "a ruthless second adventure that will solve nothing in the Gulf and end in another bloodbath.

This must be right. A proper war entails thousands of deaths on both sides. As a model one could take the Iran-Iraq conflict, in which the invasion of Iran led to a 10-year struggle in which millions were killed or wounded. Dreadful though it was, it was nonetheless a true meeting of equals, not the appalling lopsided duck-shoot that the Gulf war became.

from the liberation of Kuwait (a mixed blessing if ever there was one, especially for the Filipino worker-slaves of the Kuwaiti oligarchy), absolutely nothing.

Which brings us to the present. Having supplied Saddam with many of the agents necessary for the manufacture of horrific weapons of mass destruction, we in the West now seem almost pedantically determined to prevent him from keeping them. While

the Media Workers and I support adherence to the United Nations Resolution number whatever-it-was, any sensible person cannot help but feel that such a necessarily intrusive process will be bound to provoke resistance from the Iraqi authorities. These problems should be handled politely, not with the language of threat and war. Anyway, he didn't actually use all that nerve gas during the Gulf war, did he?

And yet, here we are, preparing to send the bombers over to kill the terrified women and children (and men) of Iraq, simply so that we can get our hands on a vial or two of anthrax which Saddam may very well never even use. And all this without the support of any of the governments in the region. Friends, how insane can we get?

Insaner, I'm afraid. For, actually, things are even worse than the Media Workers have realised. Just this week, in Las Vegas, two US citizens, Larry Wayne Harris and William Leavitt, were surrounded in their Mercedes by armed representatives of the discredited federal government, forced out of the vehicle and imprisoned without trial.

Why? Because it was thought that they might be in possession of anthrax, botulinas toxin and ricin - some of the most deadly substances known to man. The US Army's Biohazard team moved in and took away 10 bags marked "biological", which is now being tested at an Air Force base in Nevada.

There are some very interesting parallels here between this case and that of Iraq; parallels that tell us much about how we are governed. In the first place, it is not actually illegal for US citizens to possess (for their own purposes) such toxins. Why then arrest these men? Second, it is certain that the anthrax and botulinas toxin were purchased in the US itself, so how about that for hypocrisy?

Now, it is true that one of the Las Vegas Two, Mr Harris, had a previous conviction for fraudulently obtaining bubonic plague culture. But this fact merely serves to emphasise that he hadn't actually used either the bubonic plague or the anthrax. Mr Harris may not be great guy, but that doesn't mean that you've got to jump him.

Next, in another echo of the propaganda onslaught against Iraq, it was suggested that Mr Harris and Mr Leavitt were planning an anthrax strike against the New York subway. This accusation has now been firmly denied by the mayor of New York. So can one escape the suspicion that this arrest coincides too neatly with the latest stage of the Lewinsky investigation?

Of course it is true that Mr Harris is a well-known neo-Nazi, a member of the Christian Identity Church, for which Jews are "Satan's children", blacks are "mud people" and which supports toppling the democratically elected American government by force. And it is also true that his associates are rich, well-armed and bonkers. Though it must be said at once that Mr Harris is, if And what did the latter achieve? Apart anything, slightly less anti-Semitic than the Iraqi regime (with whom he has, in the past, had contact).

But there is no evidence that dealing with such people by force does any good. It is always the innocent who suffer, whether in Baghdad or Waco. So to that end I call upon my comrades in Media Workers Against The War to join my campaign, just as I endorse theirs. My slogan? Give the Nazis Back Their

## Yes, they pull a few (apron) strings, but is that a crime?



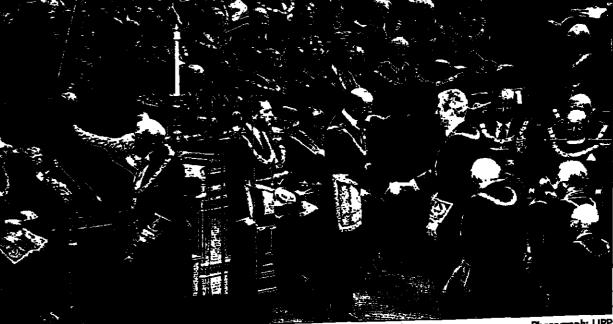
DAVID WALKER IN DEFENCE OF **FREEMASONRY** 

When Michael Higham, the Masonic bigwig, was being knocked about by MPs the other day he used a curious phrase. The Freemasons, he claimed, are a "freedom association". Masons? All that regalia, clandestine meetings, enigma wrapped in allegory, aprons, back-scratching and without question - occasional dabbling in conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Yet he was right. Political freedom means that between state and individuals there have to exist layered institutions allowing us room to manoeuvre without interference from above. Our brand of freemarket capitalism only works because economic activity is embedded in a dense network of social norms and relationships of trust, which form around voluntary organisations. Freemasoury is such an institution and such a form of trust. No Freemasons, less freedom.

You don't have to tip your wig to Edmund Burke to see his "little platoons" do embed us in society and help protect against tyranny. (Conspiracy theory watch: Burke was also a paid-up Mason.) One of Thatcherism's greatest errors was her misunderstanding of the nature of markets, as if individuals were the be-all and end-all when in fact - as the Russians are painfully discovering - without a dense civil society, market economies slip into crime and corruption.

Think, this weekend, of the ties that bind ... the bowls clubs, boy scouts, the National Trust, Greenpeace, the United Reformed Church, Chelsea Football Club, the Attlee Memorial Runners ... and, yes, the United Grand Lodge, None of them belongs to the state. Each is bigger than the individuals who form their members. Britain is thickly planted



Shake a leg: celebrations for the Grand Masonic Lodge's 275th anniversary

Photograph: UPP

with them; they are part of the national formula for political peace and social stability.

To call Chris Mullin, the Chairman of the Commons' Home Affairs Committee, a despot, would be silly. The balding, bespectacled Labour MP burnished his credentials as a civil libertarian by his tireless campaigning against state injustice on behalf of the Birmineham Six.

Yet he flirts with a dangerous attack not just on individual liberty - for why on earth should not grown men be allowed to join together for the purposes of rolling up their trouser legs if they so wish - but on the social foundations of liberty. A state which cannot tolerate, let alone protect, the privacy of its citizens, is a dangerous one indeed. Mr Mullin, on the left of the Labour Party, knows full well that the trade union movement only exists because the state deliberately decided not to look inside its lodges and rituals.

So it wasn't just the distastefulness of the bullying to which he and his colleagues subjected the Mason's chief executive (the MPs' credibility as earnest seekers after truth and justice would be a lot greater if they ever harried ministers in the same way). It was the disproportion in their response to allegations about Masonic involvement in conspiracy. So far, its escutcheon the Grand

in Britain, we have avoided importing the American culture of conspiracy. People here by and large believe that the problem with conspiracy is that, if it is to succeed, it requires conspirators to be amazingly clever. But when we look at the evidence, cock-up is always a better bet. From the arms-to-Iraq saga back to Buster Crabbe, the Cleveland child abuse or any other Great British Conspiracies: prefer the simple expla-

nation every time. Police officers - in the West Midlands, to name but one suspect force - were Masons. They conspired together. Injustice resulted. But is that really an indictment of Masonry rather than a condemnation of police management. The West Midlands Police Authority is more at fault than Masons. Similarly in the courts. The

judges belong to a secret society but that the judiciary has, at least until recently, barely been managed and certainly not subjected to external scrutiny. You could add this to the charge sheet: if you appoint only men of a certain age, schooling and background to positions where their efficiency and effectiveness is never examined, is it really surprising they get away with ... murder?

Masonry has, evidently, not lived up to its own ideals. On Lodge says firmly that "any attempt to use membership to promote business, professional or personal interests" is contrary to its ethic; officially, a Mason's prime duty is to the law of the land. Brother constable and Master judge have let the side down in a big way ... but then what organisation (churches included) ever lives up to its own ethical billing?

Masonry has always been a queer kind of secret society. Walk down the main street in Laurencekirk and the most imposing building - it challenges the Church of Scotland for size - is the Lodge. In Scotland, Masonry really does, like golf, belong to the people, or at least those involved in the building trade and medium-sized commerce. Step forward Brother Rabbie Burns.

English Masonry, like most problem is surely not that things English, is snootier. The Grand Lodge's web site (well; it was inevitable they would have one) lists among former grandees admirals, field marshals and bishops. But just because the Duke of Kent is Grand Master does not mean every fantasist's dream about Jack the Ripper being a royal deviant is true. Freemasons' lodges are only one among many forms of association. I confess that I belong to what used to be called a gentleman's club, with an imposing portico on Pall Mall - but it

does not make me either a gentleman or a potential conspirator against justice and good procedure.

Is Masonry really so tainted that Jack Straw is justified in forcing police officers and judges to declare membership as a condition of entry to the job ... and if Masonry why not also membership of the MCC. the Roman Catholic Church, the Tory Party? How many private dining societies does the House of Commons support? To call this government's thinking about privacy incoherent is an understatement.

When Masons, rather wistfully, try to remind everyone that in the past they have been less wedded to the established order, they do have a point. After all Brother Wolfgang had a liberal, anti-authoritarian sensibility.

History will not save them but sociology ought to. The Grand Lodge should purcuase for its library several copies of the books by (New Labour friendly) Robert Putnam on civil society in Italy and the United States along with \_ shelf of recent Demos pamphlets, especially those written by Geoff Mulgan, now resident at Number 10. All that stuff about networks, connectivity and trust ... that is exactly what aprons, bare breasts, daggers and passwords are all

#### Draw a lace veil over the Lord Chancellor



ANTHONY **SCRIVENER** DERRY IRVINE'S NEW CURTAINS It is time people started to think about the Lord Chancellor's human rights - like everyone else he is entitled to bad everyone giving him stick over a scrap of wallpaper and some alleged curtains. I have to say "alleged" because it appears that the curtains - allegedly - are covered by the Official Secrets Act and I do not want to end up in the Tower, not unless of course the Lord Chancellor is going to furnish my cell.

It's too much. Being accused of profligacy is a serious matter for a Scotsman, almost as bad as being called generous. As for looting his homeland's art treasures ... just because he is borrowing a skip or two of pictures to deaden the impact of all that

wallpaper. The cancellarial apartment in the House of Lords overlooks the River Thames and it goes with m'lud's job. Some people get a Rover and some people get luncheon vouchers ... the Lord Chancellor gets robes, black stockings, the right to sit on a sack of wool

and an apartment. So there you are with this apartment some 50ft above the ground and you obviously need curtains. Admittedly it's not quite like the housing estate where one spent one's childhood in abject poverty and where the neighbours and others could look in and see you changing your socks. But there is a risk of being seen by

helicopters and people in airliners on the flight path to Heathrow with binoculars or a telescope and a yen to have a right or two. It really is too a quick peer. So obviously you need curtains for a bit of privacy. A Lord Chancellor has to take off and put on his trousers all through the day because he has to dress up for the House of Lords.

So there is this great need for curtains. But you can hardly expect the Lord Chancellor to go for the suburban lace variety from John Lewis (never comfortable if one suspected that the Lord Chancellor did not have a bit of privacy for all the dressing and undressing he has to do? The fact is that a bit of decent material is needed - not some cheap smutter from Petticoat Lane.

It is the same with the wallpaper. You can hardly stick up Laura Ashley on bits of the national heritage - you don't see that at Windsor Castle or even the Palace. Although flock wallpaper sends out the right ethnic message we could not

Chancellor to wake up in the morning surrounded by 15ft high curtains with pulls and gold knobs on and Grecian urn type wallpaper, in a convertible sofabed from a mail order catalogue? No, no. In these surroundings you need something grand and celestial: something you can ascend into at night and descend from in

the morning. It is not fair to compare the cost of all this with the cost of providing legal aid certifi-

cates. People who want legal

'Wouldn't it be uncomfortable knowing the Lord Chancellor did not have a bit of privacy for all the undressing he has to do. A bit of decent material is needed and not some cheap smutter from Petticoat Lane'

knowingly undersold). Bearing really have the Lord Chanin mind the size of the windows you would need sheets of the stuff and even if you crinkle them up and sew in a bow or two you are still talking about a lot of lace.

Then, of course, there is the heritage point. The Lord Chancellor's apartment is part of our National Heritage. If you are going to be made into a judge or if you are a judge who is going to be rebuked you will be invited to this gracious apartment and there you will have an opportunity of savouring part of our patrimony. Wouldn't it be un-

cellor's pad looking like the local tandoori. So really do we have any choice other than to go for a thousand rolls or so of the hand-engraved stuff.

This has to be a good use of public money. What people do not realise is that with this quality of merchandise you do not leave the leftovers in the garage – this is stuff you could sell to some Eastern potentate or the French to paste up in Versailles.

And now if that is not enough there is all this fuss about having a Ritzy bed. Do we really expect the Lord

aid do not have the responsibility of looking after a bit of the National Heritage: all they are doing is embarking on some selfish litigation just to get some compensation for some injury or other they allege they have suffered. It is quite different and comes un-

der a different budget altogether. Nor do ordinary people understand the skill involved in getting money out of Her Majesty's Treasury to pay for curtains. And after that you have to get clearance from the spin doctors et al. Life is not

have such trouble when he was doing up Hampton Court.

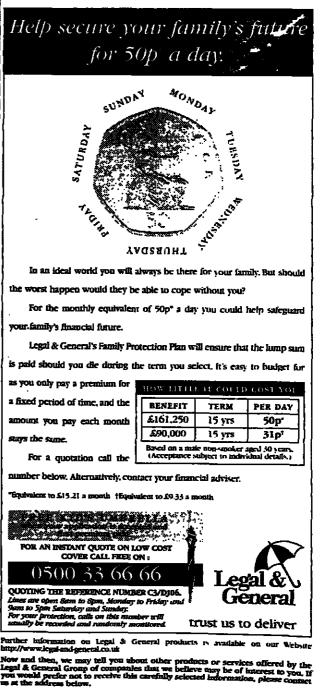
The Lord Chancellor is entitled to privacy like everyone else - see Clause Eight of the European Convention on Human Rights. The amount people spend on curtains or wallpaper or even cushions is a matter for privacy. Who knows how much William and Ffion spent on their curtains?

These are all private matters and they should be sensibly tucked away in the accounts as immaterial items under the heading of sundries or something like that. An Englishman's home is his castle and so's a Scotsman's apartment.

It was to be hoped that the Human Rights Bill would ensure privacy with respect to the cost of a person's curtains and wallpaper. Sadly this may not be so. In such circumstances the use of the Official Secrets Act is an obvious choice. You never know what devices could be attached to the folds of expensive curtain material. There is an obvious security risk. The history of espionage is full of examples of secret policemen and security operatives stuffing microphones behind wallpaper.

You, private citizens, would not like to read about the cost of your curtains and wallpaper on the front page of a daily newspaper, would you? Let us lend our support, then, to the rights of my Lord Chancellor.

Anthony Scrivener QC is a easy. Cardinal Wolsey did not former chairman of the Bar.



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## Molly Cusack Smith

MOLLY CUSACK SMITH centuries paid obedience to days drinks started at 4pm in the was for several decades living the Anglo-Norman monarchs summer house during which proof that the world of largely in order to safeguard Cusack Smith would sometimes Somerville and Ross was not yet their succession rights, which sing her favourite song, "The dead in Ireland. Amid the was not possible under the Irish West's Awake". Dinner was al-"hard-riding country gentle- clan system. men" and to the echo of porter-drinker's randy laughter", she epitomised Yeats's and France and started hunt-"indomitable Irishry". Whatever ing with her father's pack when the stranded gentry" - which the poet of order and high she was ten. But after a dis- was always held on the first Fricourtesy might have made of agreement with him over hors- day in January and continued her legendary abrasiveness, he es, she left for Paris. She started until this year. would certainly have been im- to study music but diverted to mensely proud of her unassail- dress designing and in London ing horn at the ready, presided able spirit.

successful couturier in London during the Second World War, it was as a horsewoman that Molly Cusack Smith was best known and admired. She was ioint-master of the North Gal-. way hunt for 38 years, from 1946 until she retired in 1984. She remained honorary master for the rest of her life.

Her fine horsemanship combined with a natural flamboyance made her a national figure in the drab Ireland of the 1940s. She nearly always stole the limelight at the Dublin Horse Show, and usually drew a standing ovation as she led the Galway Blazers into the ring at the Royal Dublin Society.

She bated the term "Anglo Irish" and never tired of pointing out that while she might have married into that particular strata of society, she came from one of the great Irish families - the O'Rorke of Breffni. And besides, she insisted, she could swear as fluently in Gaelic as in English.

She was born in Dublin in 1905. Her father, Charles Trench O'Rorke, owned a pack of harriers and hunted and farmed the wild and bare countryside of North Galway. The fine houses by IRA arson O'Rorke were one of many squads or the tax gatherers of great Irish families who for the new Irish state. On normal

Although she had been a cessful couturier, specialising in she always designed her own from her hunting horn. hunting outfits.

> moved in artistic circles and had John. She met her future hus-Sir Dermot died while the di-1992 interview she said the tle," she said. "We got engaged because it seemed a good idea. But, actually, it wasn't."

Back in Ireland she hunted with the Galway Blazers, founded by her ancestor John Denis O'Rorke in 1844, and - amazhunt's first woman master. But she soon formed her own Bermingham House, near complete her preparations. Tuam, Co Galway.

Life at Bermingham House continued in the style of the Anglo-Irish gentry, most of whom had long been driven from their

ways early. The social high-A precocious only child, light of the year was the annual Molly was educated in England hunt ball - described by one guest as "the last clarion call of

Molly Cusack Smith, huntestablished herself as a suc- over this grand affair, encouraging reluctant diners to leave evening dresses. In later years the bar with deafening blasts

Nimble of mind and sharp of During the Paris years she tongue, she was known became an accomplished cook, throughout Ireland for her strong language and her abiliher portrait done by Augustus ty to scarify anyone foolish enough to cross her. Desmond band, Sir Dermot Cusack Guinness recalls an occasion Smith, at a wartime cocktail par- when the pack was pursued by ty in London. They wed in 1940 an angry farmer who started to but the marriage soon failed and stone Cusack Smith and her horse. She ordered her comvorce was going through. In a panions to move on while she remonstrated with her tormatch was a very suitable one. mentor. A member of the par-"He was very rich and had a ti- ty who stayed to give her support was rendered speechless by the ferocity of her attack.

On another occasion, when she was giving luncheon to a party which included the President of Ireland, she is reputed to have told a senior ecclesiastic of the ingly for the 1940s - became the Church of Ireland, who had presented himself a minute or two before the appointed hour, pack and kennelled them at her that he had better "get to f" splendid Georgian home, out of here" so that she might

To say that she was formidable is to do her an injustice. As with old Mrs Knox in The Irish RM, she directed her underlings with bluntness "while she herself pervaded all spheres."



Cusack Smith: horsemanship combined with a natural flamboyance Photograph: Ray Ryan

of any retelling of an anecdote on the sweaty condition of her Molly Adele O'Rorke, huntswoman Although she never denied it, congregated. According to the three hours between my legs." in her old age she grew impatient story, when a groom remarked

enthusiasts of the turf or the hunt sweaty, too, if you'd spent the past Michael O'Toole 1998.

that had currency throughout the horse, Molly Cusack Smith, dis- and couturier: born Dublin 31 country and was told wherever mounting, retorted: "You'd be March 1906; married 1940 Sir Dermat Cusack-Smith Bt (died 1970; one daughter); died Galway 16 February

## Sir David Crouch

those many politicians possessed of copious talents and great commitment, who never seemed to be in the right place, holding the right ideas, at the right time to gain, hold, and acquire ministerial office. Indeed. as he once rather wryly observed to me, he failed at the polls when the whole ethos of conservatism was well-disposed towards parliamentary candidates who were of his way of thinking; and was victorious at the polls when the tide of Conservative thinking was turning against him.

By these conversational remarks he meant to point to the fact that, in the general election of 1959, when Harold Macmillan had swept all before seat in Leeds. He was an ardent Macmillanite, constantly referring his friends to Macmillan's inter-war book, The Middle Way (1938), the bible of those who believed in the possibility of an effective reconciliation, with vastly beneficent social welfare consequences, between capital and abour. Had Crouch won in Leeds he would have certainly put at least a toe on the ladder of ministerial preferment.

When he did win a seat in Canterbury in the 1966 general election, it was victory for him but a result which stood against the disastrous national crushing of the Tories by Labour. Moreover, the intellectual tide in Conservative politics was changing. Now the vague social emollience of the Macmillan years was out, and the tide of harsh competition was in. I have put the contrast between the two schools of thought rather simply: there were many shades of emphasis on both sides. But there is a certain truth here, and David Crouch was never able to surf successfully on either tide.

None of this, however, quelled the essential ebullience of his nature. Born in 1919, and educated at University College School, he evinced an early talent for self-publicity. His career, indeed, mainly lay in the appreciation of his quite extraordinary ability both to understand the real merits of any products he was marketing, and to be able to communicate those merits to almost any audience. Indeed, his wife Margaret, the daughter of a soldier, whom he married in 1947, once said, jokingly, that she had been

lured by his silver tongue. He was a handsome man, and a fine speaker, but he did not become a valued senior employee of ICI, nor a director of the International Wool Secretariat nor a director of Pfizer solely because of his charm. There was a very hard edge to his bonhomie, and an ability

DAVID CROUCH was one of cessities of any business he

I first saw, however, the brilliantly ameliorative side of his nature in 1969. A general election it was clear, could not be long delayed. There were many who while enthusiastically supportive of Edward Heath's generally stringent proposed economic policies, were anxious that they should not be propounded at the expense of serious concern for the disadvantaged in society. The expensive teams of pub-

lic relations consultants - the forerunners of today's spin doctors - were solely concerned with empty image. But Crouch was to hand. At great expense of time and energy, and for no him, he had failed to secure a remuneration, he helped youngsters like myself to make sure that the real needs of the people were not forgotten in the welter of party battle.

The Conservative Political Centre published an influential pamphlet: "Serving the Old". I wrote the text, and there were many contributors to the ideas; but the hand that guided my pen was that of David Crouch. He published, in 1987, a de-

lightful book, part recollection, part history, part philosophical reflection, A Canterbury Tale. It is now out of print, but somebody ought to revive it, so that readers can see how practicality and compassion can be



Crouch was never very willing, like many of his generation, to talk about his war experience. But he served in London through the tortures of the Blitz, and for the whole of the six awful years. That period, I believe shaped his character, as it did that of many others. Memories, as A Conterbury Tale shows, formed an important part of the character of a considerable man.

#### **Patrick Cosgrave**

David Lance Crouch, politician and marketing and public relations consultant: born 23 June 1919; MP (Conservative) for Canterbury 1966-87; Kt 1987; married 1947 Margaret Noakes (one son, one daughter); died Faversham, Kent 18 February

Lawrence Sanders, author. died Pampano Beach, Florida, aged 78. Wrote best-selling novels such as The Anderson Tapes (1970) and The First Deadly Sin

to see the administrative ne-

politician, died Bridgetown, bados Senate 1976-86.

Barbados, aged 86. Led attempts to establish a common government for Jamaica. Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados and six other former British colonies in the Caribbean 1959-62. Sir Arnot Cato, physician and Served as president of the Bar-

3. a - ; Maceriais

#### Robbie James

ROBBIE JAMES gave his life childhood that he was a talent- début in a 7-0 victory over Mal- enthusiastic as ever at the age to Welsh football. He played 47 ed footballer, Robbie James did ta at Wrexham. The rise con- of 36, he took a prominent role times for his country, always dis- not plunge straight into the tinued in 1978/79 and 1980/81, demanded of every man who school, instead taking a job 1981/82 was followed by reledons the red shirt, but arguably with an electrical firm. Howev- gation a year later. ments at club level that he tracting interest from both made the most vivid impression.

As an indefatigably competitive attacking midfielder cal club, Swansea. cum striker, James played an integral part in Swansea City's prodigious feat in sweeping from the Football League's basement division to its too flight in the space of four years.

Then, having earned his place among the elite, he did not flounder as some lower-league performers do following such a meteoric rise. Indeed, he excelled, not missing a game during the 1981/82 campaign in which the Swans finished sixth in the table, the most exalted position in their history. In addition, he was top scorer with 14 goals, no mean attainment in a side containing fellow Welsh luminary Leighton James and the prolific English marksman Bob Latchford.

Though it was clear from

his immense achieve- er, in March 1973, after at- At this point, having helped Cardiff City and Arsenal, he signed as an amateur for his lo-

> Under the shrewd guidance of its manager Harry Gregg, the former Manchester United goalkeeper and survivor of the Munich air crash, the solidly built James made such rapid progress that he was given his senior début only two months later, aged only 16, on the day City slipped from the Third to the Fourth Division. Thereafter he became a Swansea stalwart, enormously strong and combative, but also skilful and versatile enough to perform in either midfield or the front

The Swans' astonishing sequence of promotions, all during the managerial reign of John Toshack, began in 1977/78, the season in which James made his full international

Welsh Cup triumphs, James opted to remain in the top grade by accepting a £160,000 transfer to Stoke City. Somehow he never did himself justice in the Potteries, but spent three more productive First Division campaigns with Queen's Park Rangers before dropping to the Second with Leicester in

At Filbert Street James became a right-back, helping in the development of a young defence before returning to Swansea as captain in January 1988. That spring proved eventful as he won his last Wales cap on his 31st birthday, then led his new charges to promotion from the Fourth Division.

James pocketed another Welsh Cup winner's medal in 1989, before serving Bradford City for two seasons and joining Cardiff City in 1992. Still as 1998.

in the Bluebirds' Division threeplaying the passionate fervour professional game on leaving but sadly the golden peak of title triumph of 1992/93 and collected his fifth and final Welsh Cup medal. When his League career ended later that year, he Swansea to three consecutive had made 782 appearances, a total bettered by only a handful of others, and scored 133

goals.

James went on to serve non-League Merthyr Tydfil and Barry Town, and was playermanager of Llanelli when be collapsed and died during a match with Porthcawl. To the very last he played the game the only way he knew how, with every onnce of his being. Ivan Ponting

Robert Mark James, footballer: born Gorseinon, Glamorgan 23 March 1957; played for Swansea City 1973-83, Stake City 1983-84, Queen's Park Rangers 1984-87, Leicester City 1987-88, Swansen City 1988-90, Bradford City 1990-92, Cardiff City 1992-93; capped 47 times for Wales 1978-88; twice married (one son, two daughters);

died Llanelli, Dyfed 18 February

#### FAITH & REASON

#### The Black Death sails across the Gulf

On the anniversary of the plague our ships are setting sail to wage war on a biological terror. John Kennedy reflects on some uncomfortable parallels.

The Black Death came to Western Europe 650 years ago this month. It shook and shaped Europe more than any other event in our history. The anniversary coincides with the launching of a plan to crush Saddam Hussein's capacity for biological warfare. This conjunction naturally provokes some

nervous thought. First, the story. In February 1348, the first victims landed in Italian ports. There is a graphic account of galley crews dying at their oars as they sought haven at Genoa, to be driven back with flaming arrows. The pestilence had till then raged in Asia for years - a fitting torment for the heathen Turk. But in two years, it killed a third of Europeans, brought to us along routes created in

the great crusades against the infidel. The epidemic was caused by a bacillus which fleas carried to rats and to humans. At the time the best explanation was offered by the University of Paris

junction of planets, giving rise to a poisonous miasma in the atmosphere. The religious culture of the day insisted that loose living was the cause; one commentator denounced the tendency of girls to dress rather saucily as men; "But God, in this matter, as in all others, brought marvellous remedy", he concluded. Langland, in Piers Plowman was clear. "These pestilences were for pure sin".

So cure was sought in penitence as much as in prudential hygiene. There grew up great armies of penitential flagellants, whose marchings and thrashings sometimes became something unspeakably awful with the massacre of Jews, usually by burning. In contrast, countless good people went to certain death to offer less than certain help to others - acts of real heroism, or more truly, saintliness.

Two other responses developed. The first was the spontaneous flight into a faith of personal protection. Around 1350, first names became much more explicitly Christian as the people gathered round protective saints - Sebastian, Nicholas, Lawrence, and above all Mary. The second response was rather different: the Boccaccio tendency. Boccaccio lived through the worst of the pestilence in Florence, and testified to

whose scholars suggested a fatal con- of terror. So a quite new literature of ities and sorting through them at a speed carnal affirmation arose, first in Italian. far more frightening than the rat-flea then in French and then in Chaucer's

(1980)

Remarkably, the plague scarcely interrupted the political conflicts of the time - in the English case, fighting the French. Within four years of the battle of Crécy in 1346, nearly half of all English and French had died of plague, but by 1352 they were back to the business of slaughter as usual. In all the panic, saintliness and hysterical cruelty, one motif dominates. It is the sheer animal vitality that simply struggled, fed and bred though the whole episode. The following age was less kindly and simply pious; it was crueller, more credulous and more cynical. But it had also begun to celebrate its own human complexity, as Chaucer and Boccaccio testify.

Centuries later, the fleet dispatched to the Persian Gulf has crossed the path of those medieval plague galleys. And we feel that we understand creation much more profoundly now, and manage it so much more effectively. But how foolish we would be to trust that feeling. Even our forebears would gape to see the world-threatening modern rationality which sees us fighting to deny doomsday weapons to Baghdad, while countenancing them with apparent equanimity in Tel Aviv. It is only one a sensuality experienced in the midst example. We are generating complex-

combinations of the medieval Levant. It may be that, even now, our nemesis is heading towards New York and London in a flotilla of battered Lebanese freighters. Yet we have a simple confidence in ourselves that our medieval forebears dared ascribe only to God. Ironically, the first example of that arrogance of modernity was created in their time, in Gothic Siena. It is Ambrogio Lorenzetti's vast fresco, The Allegory of Good and Bad Government. It depicts the splendours of the one and the evils of the other. It is entirely bereft of Christian symbol or humility. It celebrates a world manageable within given laws, under human control. It was completed in 1347, just as its creator and his city vanished into the unman-

ageable horror of the Pestilence. The question arises - can many more anniversaries of the Black Death pass without some drastic failure of human management? We have the technology to clone the Four Horsepersons of the Apocalypse, and it is incredible that we shall escape the consequences. Our delusions and perversions continue to be celebrated in the name of truth and justice. It seems a valuable part of the Christian discipline to imagine ourselves into that catastrophic past, as preparation for what might be to come.

# James: played the game with every ounce of his being

#### BIRTHS, **MARRIAGES** & DEATHS

BIRTHS

ARTHUR: to Jojo Moves and Charles Arthur, on 2 February, a daughter, Saskia Elise. Wonderfully healthy. es-

TINSLEY: John, Canon Emerius of Southwark Cathedral, died peacefully on 17 February 1998, aged 80 years. Beloved hustrand of Iill, Funeral on Friday 27 February at Kingston St. Mary, Taumton at 2.30pm followed by private cremation. No flowers please, donations if wished to Christian Aid may be sent to E. White & Son Ltd. Funeral Directors. 138/139. East Funeral Directors, 138/139, East Reach, Taunton TA1 3HN.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

ALLEMBY: A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of John Allenby CBE will take place on Thursday 12 March at 12 noon at the Church of All Saints. Crondall, Farnham, Surrey. All are

MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS TODAY: Prince Edward attends the Rugby Football Union match, England v Wales, at Twickenham, Middleses, The Princess Repal, Patron, Scottish Rugby Union, atten Scotland v France International Match a taylicid Stadhum, Edinburgh.

Changing of the Guard Changing of the Guard TODAY. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; No 7 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Bucklepham Palace, 11.30am, tend provided by the Circumder Guards.

#### Birthdays

FODAY: King Harald V of Norway, 61; Sir John Bourn, Comptroller and Auditor General, 64; Professor Ruth Bowden, anatomist, 83; Miss Jilly Cooper, author and journalist, 61: M Hubert de Givenchy, fashion de-signer, 71; Mr Michael Deakin, documentary film maker, 59; Mr Leslie Durbin, silversmith, 85; Baroness Fookes, former MP, 62; Sir John Goulden, UK Permanent Representative. North Atlantic Council. 57; Sir Michael Grylls, former MP, 64; Sir Conrad Heron, former senior civil servant, 82; Sir Reginald Hibbert, former ambassador to France, 76; Sir John McGregor Hill, former chairman, British Nuclear Fuels, 77; Lord Hunter, a former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 85; Mr Peter McEnery, actor, 58; Mr Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, 74; Professor Sir Rupert Myers, scientist. 77; Ms Diana Morgan MP, 46; General Sir Robert Pascoe, former Adjutant-General, 66; Sir Ashley Ponsonby, former Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, 77; Professor John Prescott, principal, Wye College, University of London, 61; Lieut-Gen Sir John Richards, former marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, 71; Mr Alan Rickman, actor, 52; Professor Frederick Rimmer, Emeritus Professor of Music, 84; Miss Nina Simone, singer, 64; Professor Leslie Wagner, Vice-Chancellor, Leeds Metropolitan University, 55; Mr David Wood, actor and playwright, 54.

TOMORROW: The Duchess of Kent, 65; Miss Judy Cornwell, actress, 56; Mr Joseph Ettedgui, fashion de-signer, 62; Professor Sir Brian Follett. Vice-Chancellor, University of Warwick, 59; Mr Bruce Forsyth, entertainer, 70; Miss Sheila Hancock, actress, 65; Senator Edward Connedy, 60; Sir John Kerr, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, and Head of the Diplomatic Service, 56; Mr Niki Lauda, motor-racing cham-

pion, 49: Miss Frances Line, former

controller, BBC Radio 2, 58; Mr De-von Malcolm, cricketer, 35; Sir Christopher Meyer, ambassador to the United States, 54; Sir John Mills, actor, director and producer, 90; Mr Noel Murphy, rugby footballer, 61; Mr Richard Page MP, 57; Mr Nigel Planer, actor, 45; Air Marshal Graeme Robertson, Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Strike Command, 53; Lieut-Gen the Hon Sir William Rous, former Quarter Master General, Ministry of De-fence, 59; Sir William Slack, consultant surgeon, 73; Mr lan Stark, show jumper, 44; Lord Strathchyde, Opposition Chief Whip in the House of Lords, 38; Miss Julie Walters, ac-

tress, 48; Mr Robert Young, actor, 91

**Anniversaries** 

TODAY: Births: John Henry New man, Cardinal, 1801; Wystan Hugh Auden, poet, 1907. Deaths: Malcolm (Little), black leader, murdered 1965, On this day: the Battle of Verdun commenced, 1916. Today is the Feast Day of St George of Amastris Germanus of Granfel, St Peter Damian, St Robert Southwell and St Severian of Scythopolis. TOMOR-ROW: Births: George Washington, First President of the US, 1732; Arthur Eric Rowton Gill, artist, sculptor and typographer, 1882; Luis Bunuel, film director, 1900. Deaths: Amerigo Vespucci, navigator, 1512; Andy Warhol (Andrew Warhola). Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Baradates, St Margaret of Cortona and Saints Thalassius and

Lectures

TODAY British Museum: Rowena Loverance, "Icons in Byzantium", 1.15pm. TOMORROW

Tace Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Bonnard's Enrapturing Intimisme

Milai Mali

an acquisition.

share price, pence

640 - AB Foods

Share Spotlight

## Footsie hits another peak in subdued trading

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

ANOTHER record-breaking from convincing performance. Many experts felt that with New York seemingly catching profits, next week, are ex-movements. For example its breath the stock market would do well to avoid a sharp downturn,

In the event Footsie strolled to yet another peak, ending 33.1 points higher at 5.751.6, and supporting indices, often in more robust form, hit new highs. This week Footsie has had a remarkable run, climbing nearly 170.

Trading, however, was often subdued vesterday with many investors prepared to sit on the sidelines.

Again financials provided the powerhouse. The takeover storics may be looking tired and bewhiskered but there is no denying they still have a a 2,170p high, up 100p. The Inter-Continental Hotels and tremendous impact on senti-still family controlled group Resorts with an exceedingly ment. Institutional buying, as could be a major player in any rich £1.7bn offer.

£855m. as Asia extracts its in-voters was only 19,552 shares. evitable toll. At one time up ed 45.5p higher at 764.5p.

Only weeks ago the shares were bumping along at 543p. lowest for more than two years. Before the Far Eastern crisis erupted last year they as chairman, with an 10.5p gain were as high as 1,081.5p. HSBC, figures on Mon-

day, gained 82p to 1,772p. The shares have moved between 2,347p and 1,366p in the flected its results with a 9p gain past year.

Footsie included Schroders, ened that it would emerge the investment group which hit victorious in the battle for

most of the session, illustrated row markets and it takes little the recovery attraction. Year's activity to provoke sharp pected to be flat, down to recorded volume in the non

Elsewhere Safeway, the 64p, the banking group end- supermarket chain, ignored the threat of a profits warning. gaining 14.5p to 375p and EMI, the showbiz group, responded to a statement that Sir Colin Southgate will continue to 494.5p. Jim Fifield re-mains chief officer of EMI Music.

Rank, the leisure group, reto 340p and Bass fell 26.5p to Other financials buoying 960p as speculation strength-

Standard Chartered, the 66p to 1.865p. Both classes, 11 per cent interest. Cash-rich helping the shares 32p higher faced delays. Racal Electronic session, although it was a far best performing blue chip for however, are exceedingly nar-Associated British Foods, in to 1,880p. Engineer TI Group held at busy trading, rose 23p to 630p 490p. Merrill Lynch believes

(after 645.5p) on rumours of the relative fall over the past six months has been over-BAA firmed to 561.5p as Robert Fleming described the done. It expects a recovery Thursday's shake out, recovshortly. The shares touched airport group as "a safe and 690.5p in October. Difficuldefensive utility with strong asset backing". Salomon Smith Barney lifted its British ties in the group's mechanical seals division have created the unease. Merrill sees group Aerospace target to 2,300p, profits of £223m last year and £245m this year.

Profit warnings were again a restraining influence. Albert Fisher maintained its reputation as a perennial underfigures would be lower.

would be little changed. Shares of the recruitment 57p, closing at 53.5p. selection company were floated in October at 245p.

gained 8p to 264p following an investment dinner with Henderson Crosthwaite; Da La Rue, the security printer, managed a modest rally after

ering 17p to 287p. Sema, the computer group did its admittedly outside chances of joining Footsie no harm at all with a 72.5p gain to 1,910p after clinching a £305m five-year contract to operate the Government's benefits agency medical

service. Card Clear, the payment performer, falling 6.5p to and fraud prevention group, 25.5p as it warned interim returned to market after the reverse £24.5m takeover of SBL fell 22p to 291.5p HTEC, which supplies loyalty after saying interim results systems. Suspended at 47p in January the shares touched

> Uno, a furniture retailer, rose 30p to 230p after a large

#### TAKING STOCK

Remember Pan Andean Resources, the little oil explorer which crashed more than 100p to 30p in a day? The shares have been firm this week on talk of intriguing developments near its Bolivian field where the oil being sought was found to have "migrated". Repsol, the State owned Spanish giant, is drilling next to PAR's Bolivian site and, if stories from the jungle can be believed, may have scored a hit. It seems the Repsol drill produced similar results to the PAR exercise, prompting thoughts the oil which so many expected to find is still available. Some suspect Repsol may help develop the PAR block. The shares are 35p.

Many reasons are given for a company going private. Tetronics, a supplier of high temperature equipment, bas come up with a new twist. It has decided its "best interests" are no longer served by having a public market in its shares. A

	-		well as hopes that share Far Eastern connection continue to recover, are influences.	s with consolidation and ma	ke a Dingeo, the wine and spir ge of giant, fell 10p to 605p as cials. spokeswomen denied the	1 460 - S	floated in October at 245p.  Core became the latest drugs casualty, crashing 76.5p to 118.5p after warning that two of its three potential drugs	overhang, thought to be a line of stock owned by fund manager Gartmore, was placed by SG Securities.  a public market in its shares. A major shareholder, Alan Heber-Percy recently died. The shares were 95p on Ofex.
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## Sema shares soar as Government awards £305m deal to disability assessors

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE DEPARTMENT of Social Security yesterday awarded a huge services group. News of the deal, ended the day up 72.5p at 1910p.

Under the terms of the controversial contract, which has faced stiff trade union opposition, Sema will take over the management of 220 istrative staff and the 3,000 part-time doctors who help assess whether claimants qualify for disability or incapacity benefit.

bring enhanced management and in- off bids from rival outsourcing part of the wider review of the welthe Benefits Agency Medical Service, thereby speeding up the service.

contract to handle the medical as-sessment of disability benefit claims

John Tilley, managing director of Sema, said: "The Sema Group to Sema, the Anglo-French computer working with the DSS will modernise worth £305m over a five-year peri- of giving claimants service imue for money."

The move is unusual for Sema, mation technology (IT) outsourcing after the two parties failed to agree a price. and systems integration projects. volves some information technology, it is more of a pure outsourcing project, requiring superior organi-Sema is understood to have beaten

creased investment in technology to groups such as Capita and Andersen fare state which is currently taken tract suggests that the pace of out-Consulting to win the contract.

sion to award the contract was not services to private contractors.

place, and added that it does not have sourcing is unlikely to slow under the The DSS insisted that the deci- a dogmatic view about outsourcing Labour government, even though

However, the award of the con-

#### the existing provision with the aim Philips breaks off Origin stake talks with Price Waterhouse

nounced that talks with Price Waterhouse, about the consulting group taking a minority stake in Origin, which normally specialises in infor- Philips' services and consulting arm, had broken down

Philips agreed to sell the stake to Price Waterhouse Civil Service doctors, 1,200 admin- Although the BAMS project in- last October but did not disclose the price. After several delays, negotations have now broken down.

However, Philips said that the strategic alliance between Origin and Price Waterhouse would continue. complex enterprise resource planning services, which ing Origin as a separate company.

od, sent shares in Sema soaring. They provements and taxpayers better val- PHILIPS, the Dutch electronics giant, yesterday an- help companies manage their most important activities. Separately, Origin said it had appointed Robert E help reduce fraud. Groups on the Pickering, a former President of US IT services group BSG Alliance/IT, as its chief executive.

Origin has been one of the fastest-growing divisions of Philips since it was set up as a separate division in 1996. Last year, its sales grew by 21 per cent and it posted its first profit. However, Philips is currently involved in a massive reorganisation which involves it pulling out of all businesses which are peripheral to its main sational and management skills. The two companies currently co-operate in supplying activities. The company is now expected to consider float-

first dreamed up under the previous administration.

The Labour government has already awarded a £450m contract to several contracts, like BAMS, were handle the pay, pensions and administration for the armed forces to EDS, the US outsourcing giant.

It is also currently conducting trials for a huge contract to improve efficiency in the Benefits Agency and shortlist include a partnership between IBM and EDS, as well as a consortium including Sema and management consultancy group Deloitte & Touche. The contract is expected to be awarded in the next six

However, many large government outsourcing deals have run into problems. The Inland Revenue comprehens to think that these large contracts still make sense."

puter system, designed by EDS as part of a £1.60m contract, crashed under the burden of self-assessment claims. And a two year delay to a £1.5bn contract designed to pay benefits with electronic "smart cards" and computerise Post Offices around the country, managed by ICL. the computer group, has prompted the government to consider bringing in rival suppliers.

Given the size and complexity of the contracts, inclusing experts are not surprised that they frequently run into problems. "If I had a huge computer contract to award I would divide it between three or four companies," said Richard Holway, an industry analyst. "But the Gov-

#### Bass set to win Inter-Continental with £1.7bn offer

By Andrew Yates

BASS is poised to buy Inter-Continental, the upmarket hotel on the brink of signing a deal to purchase the 211-strong hotel the world." chain for more than \$2.8bn private Japanese group.

competition from Marriott International and Patriot American Hospitality, the US hotel Group, the UK leisure group, to win a bidding war for Inter-Continental. The acquisition is likely to be announced within

good fir for Bass, which owns the flects nervousness that Bass Holiday Inn chain but lacks a has been forced to pay too to create a strong position in the strong, five-star, luxury hotel much to win the bidding war. branc.

complement each other much debt will be included in has seen Bass sell off its tengeographically. Holiday Inn has the deal." a big presence in the US, while

Inter-Continental is stronger in the biggest hotel groups in the Europe and the Far East.

One City observer said: "This deal makes a lot of sense 24 more under construction. Of group, in what promises to be the strategically. Bass has lacked a these, 117 trade under the biggest deal it has ever made. The top-quality hotel brand and Inter-Continental name, in-British brewing, hotels and this deal plugs the gap that the leisure giant is understood to be group had in its portfolio and gives it a good presence around Bass shares fell 26.5p to

(£1.7bn) from Seibu Saison, a 960p, however, over fears that the group may overpay for Bass has fought off stiff Inter-Continental Mark Finnie. leisure analyst at NatWest Securities said: "We estimate that Saison makes an EBITDA, magnates, and Ladbroke [annual profit before interest, tax and depreciation) of around \$180m. If Bass pays more than \$2.8bn the deal will be on a very punctiv multiple."

Another industry analyst Inter-Continental would be a said: "The share price fall re-The group is dripping with debt The two groups would also and nobody is quite sure how frenetic corporate activity that

The deal will create one of betting chain and Gala bingo

world. Inter-Continental has 211 hotels in 77 countries and cluding London flagship hotels on Hyde Park and Mayfair and there are hotels in most of the main capitals of Europe. It has sites throughout Asia including three in Japan, and a large hotel in Seoul, South Korea. The group also has 20 mid-market Forum hotels and 50 Global Partnerships, where it has teamed up with local operators

to run sites. Bass already has 2,380 hotels, including almost 1,600 Holiday Inns. It has 134 Crown Plaza sites, its own upmarket brand. Analysts believe they could eventually be converted to Inter-Continental sites as the group seeks premium hotel market.

anted pub estate, the Coral



Room with an upmarket view: The Inter-Continental hotel in Hyde Park, London

Photograph: Lucy Blake

## NatWest moves to placate institutions with director appointments

By Andrew Verity

NATWEST the troubled banking giant, yesterday moved to bring its battle with institutions to an end by appointing the chief next year. executive of Boots, the executive chairman of a packaging company and the man who rescued London who saved the insur-Lloyd's of London from disaster as non-executive directors.

chief executive and deputy chairman of Boots, is widely tipped to take over as chairman when Lord Alexander leaves

Sir David Rowland, the former chairman of Lloyd's of ance market from collapse, and

in April. A spokesman said the move was an injection of "new blood to refresh the board".

Lord Alexander has come under attack for his stewardship of NatWest especially after last year's discovery of a £90m derivatives loss at NatWest Markets, its investment banking arm, Anthony Habgood, chief execthe resignation of the unit's chief

uities division to Bankers Trust. Lord Blyth has the reputa-

tion for value-driven management which analysts say would be welcomed by investors who have seen NatWest underperform its peers in the banking sector over recent years.

Lord Alexander has indicated previously that he is unlikely that Sir Desmond Pitcher had

Lord Blyth of Rowington, utive of Bunzi, will join the board executive and the sale of its eq- to continue as chairman after completing 10 years in the job in

> Institutions began pressing for new board members last year after the board was seen to have made sluggish progress in fixing a merger to secure the

group's long-term survival. The bank also announced Wanless, chief executive, had re-

fused to renew his nomination. Sir John Banham, who has become chairman of Tarmac and Nat West, will stand down as he approaches the end of a five-

resigned with immediate effect. NatWest said vesterday that Nat West's nominations com- both departures were amicable mittee, which includes Derek and nothing to do with disagreements over corporate strategy.

City analysts yesterday weicomed the move. Shares rose Kingfisher since joining slightly to 1168p from 1160p. As recently as last summer, the shares were languishing at year term. A spokesman for around 700p.

#### Rogerson gets £200,000 pay-off from BG

By Chris Godsmark Business Correspondent

BG, the former British Gas, last night announced the departure of deputy chairman Philip Rogerson, who famously described plans to slash pipeline charges by the industry regulator, Clare Spottiswoode, as "the biggest smash-and-grab raid ever".

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Mr Rogerson, 53, departs with a £200,000 pay-off and a £149,000 company pension. He was on a fixed-term contract with BG until the end of 1999 with a basic salary of £320,000.

He is to become non-executive chairman of a BG subsidiary, Pipeline Integrity International, which the group yesterday said it had sold to Mercury Asset Management's Private Equity arm for £90m. Pipeline Integrity, based in Cramlington, Northumberland, is responsible for high tech in-spections of the gas pipeline. network using equipment nicknamed the "intelligent pig".

Mercury has rai from private investors and in debt to fund the purchase, which includes a deferred payment of £6m to BG dependent on the company's performance over five years. Tony Powell, from Schlumberger, has been drafted in as chief executive.

Mr Rogerson was responsible for piloting BG's complaint against pipeline cuts through the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC), which last year rejected much of the the company's case. He had previously said he would leave BG after the MMC probe concluded and has already become non-executive director of the Halifax and deputy chairman of Aggreko, the power hire specialists.

#### Hong Kong reacts angrily to credit downgrade

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong

THE HONG KONG government has reacted with barely suppressed fury after the Moody's credit rating agency downgraded its short-term credit rating for the first time in 14 years. Moody's warned the territory's financial markets face more risk from Asia's economic turmoil

Kong's financial secretary, described the move as "unfair, unreal and improper". He accused Hong Kong borrowers has also Moody's of simply including Hong Kong "in the same broad brush of all the other countries affected by the currency crises", ignoring the stability of the Hong Kong dollar.

Hong Kong railway corporations, previously blue-chip rated borrowers, has been downgraded from Prime-1 to Prime-

to negative. Although there was consid-

was affecting the Hong Kong environment. However, the agency noted that the territory's "fiscal situation and regulatory environment remain sound". Short-term debt of the two

Sir Donald Tsang, Hong 2. The outlook for foreign currency borrowings of these two institutions and other prime been downgraded from stable

erable surprise at these revaluations, investors seemed less concerned than the Hong Kong Moody's said the downgrade government. The stock market

resulted from increased volatilinched marginally upwards after currency and make it more if banking reforms were comity in East Asian markets, which a day of lacklustre trading. The competitive because it fears pleted first. benchmark Hang Seng Index rose 0.6 per cept to 10,551.70. Stocks likely to be affected by the Moody's re-rating showed no sign of being marked down.

Moody's also raised some eyebrows by reclassifying the outlook for China's bonds. notes and bank deposits from stable to negative. It said the downgrade reflected "policy constraints associated with exchange rate management" following the incorporation of Hong Kong into China. This could have "possible adverse effects on the competitiveness of China's export sector over the immediate term".

In other words, Moody's believes China will not devalue its stabilising the currency, but only

this may destroy the fixed link between the Hong Kong dollar

and the US dollar. There is no indication in recent export figures that China is becoming less competitive. The export sector continues to account for less than 10 per cent of the Chinese economy's output and is therefore far less important to the economy as a whole in comparison with the Asian countries suffering from financial turmoii.

Meanwhile in Indonesia. Peter Gontha, a businessman close to the family of President Suharto, said a currency board. which would peg the rupiah to the dollar, would be effective in

Mr Gontha has been widely rumoured as the person responsible for bringing the currency board proposal to President Suharto's attention ~ a claim he has repeatedly denied.

Speaking at a discussion on the currency board, Mr Gontha said he did not believe, as widely feared, that such a system would trigger a rush for dollars, in turn forcing Bank Indonesia to deplete its foreign exchange reserves defending the currency.

Indonesian stocks fell for a second day as the prospect of the rupiah being pegged to the dollar became less likely. The Jakarta Stock Exchange Composite Index fell 1.02 points or 0.21 per cent to 495.2.

#### Japan's economic package fails to provide the expected stimulus

JAPAN'S ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has dashed hopes by producing an economic stimulus package which fell far short of expectations, writes Stephen Vines.

The package, issued yesterday, contained neither the tax cutting or increased government spending measures which were anticipated by the financial markets. The stock market responded apathetically, ending the day up less than 1 per cent.

The package, which had been heralded as a move to boost the flagging economy, focused on deregulation measures and a clutch of soft loans to troubled East Asian coun-

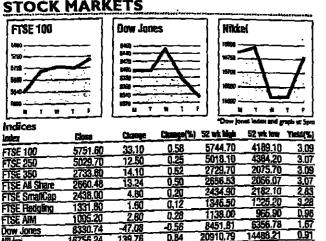
tries. These measures were accompanied by others floated by LDP leaders in recent weeks.

The measures included improving balance sheets by revaluing land assets held by companies and banks, making it easier for companies to buy back their own shares, promoting the building of second homes and encouraging private companies to get involved in infrastructure projects.

There is still a possibility of new tax initiatives in a supplementary budget to be issued once Japan's parliament has completed the budgetary process at the end of March or in early April.

"We are confident that from here on, all of those measures will produce a multiplier effect and that our economy will certainly have a strong recovery," said the LDP in the introduction to the package. However, this is the fifth so-called economic stimulus package to have been issued since the Asian financial crisis began at the end of last year. None of the packages have been viewed by investors as tackling fundamental problems,

Japan's apparent reluctance to reflate the economy is a major problem for other Asian nations who have been looking to Tokyo to give the region a lead.



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**JEREMY** WARNER ON HOW VIRGIN IS BECOMING THE BUTT OF BRITAIN'S ANTI-BUSINESS CULTURE

## Why Branson is suddenly getting a poor press

Poor Richard Branson. Little more than two Atlantic makes much money, but then because weeks ago he was basking in the glory of his courtroom victory over Guy Snowden of the national lottery - another triumph for Britain's best known and, according to the surveys, most admired businessman. Now everyone seems to be ganging up on him again, and this time the attack isn't led from the front, as it was five years ago, by his old bête noire, British Airways.

Both the Economist and the Spectator have this week challenged the financial credibility of Mr Branson's burgeoning business empire, Panorama has broadcast a knocking programme about Virgin Trains, his Channel Tunnel Rail Link consortium has collapsed, and there is a growing whispering campaign against him in the City.

What's going on? Is the Virgin empire really in difficulty? Or is this simply another case of Britain's penchant for doing down successful entrepreneurs, a symptom of our generally anti-business media and culture. Or perhaps this is just Mr Branson falling victim to his turbo-charged publicity machine. Those that court the limelight should not be too surprised when journalists and others start critically nosing around in their affairs.

Neither of the two magazine pieces told us anything we didn't already know about Virgin, or at least suspect. The Spectator article was, in any case, largely inaccurate polemic. Certainly it is common knowledge in the City that none of the Branson empire outside Virgin

many of these businesses are still in their startup phase, that hardly comes as a great surprise.

It is also generally known that Mr Branson hides the secrets of his finances behind a clock of secretive offshore holding companies. Again, this is not uncommon among billionaires. By the same token, it is also entirely reasonable in such circumstances to ask, why

the mystery? Could he be hiding something? Even so, Mr Branson does not, on the face of it, seem to be in any more trouble financially now than he's ever been. In fact, he insists, with cash generation at more than £150m a year, the Virgin group has rarely been as healthy. Almost all his new ventures are externally financed by strong outside partners. Even the much and deservedly maligned Virgin Trains is claimed to be ahead of budget and on schedule for a stock market float this summer.

Financially then, the true position seems to be the very reverse of what is suggested, so much so that Mr Branson can confidently plan for many of his businesses to be listed over the next few years in London and elsewhere. But even if this were not the case, even if the empire were on the brink, does it actually matter to anyone other than Mr Branson, his partners, bankers, creditors and employees? Probably not. Because Mr Branson's is a privately owned and run empire, there aren't any shareholders potentialdisadvantaged or deceived by his secrecy.

Moreover, the present absence of dividenddemanding outside shareholders to answer to

may enable Mr Branson to take a longer-term view on investment and growth than would be possible for a publicly listed company. This, in any case, is what Mr Branson claimed in the late 1980s, when after an unhappy few years as a publicly quoted company he took his interests private once more. Certainly, he would be unable as a single publicly quoted company to engage in the same range and diversity of entrepreneurial activity and start-

So why the knocking copy? One possibility which shouldn't be entirely discounted is that this is just more dirty tricks - competitors trying to undermine him. It happened once before, with British Airways, so it could happen again with some of the other entrenched monopolists offended by Mr Branson's combative business ventures and style. Both Pepsi and Coke have a powerful interest in doing him down, as does Camelot, and the big high street banks with Virgin Direct. All these companies will be smiling broadly about Mr Branson's bad press, even if they didn't initiate

But actually, all this has probably got much more to do with the fascination of Mr Branson and his astonishing success than anything else. In his relatively short business career Mr Branson has managed to create one of Britain's most widely recognised brands internationally. The only one I can think of which might come close is, ironically, British Airways.

Behind it all, however, lies a business em-

pire of surprisingly little substance. That's not sot say Virgin is small or insignificant in business terms. Plainly it is not. But set against the extraordinary reputation and presence Virgin has achieved both domestically and internationally, there's not a lot there. As the Economist tells us, moreover, much of it is loss-making. If Mr Branson succeeds, he will over the next 10 years correct that position. The size of the business and its profitability will begin to match the fame of the brand.

This is the reverse of how most companies achieve reputation and brand recognition. Usually brand awareness stems from a particularly desirable and innovative product. In Virgin's case it seems to be the other way round. The name has a power and persona all of its own. which Mr Branson and his partners are using to target the soft under-belly of entrenched monopolies operating across a range of commodity products and services.

There's nothing unique in this approach. Mr Branson has compared it to the kerretsus and chaebols of the Far East - linked families of companies operating across a range of different industries - but there are some parallels in the West too. For instance, Nike is attempting to use its hugely powerful sports apparel brand to force its way into related but until recently quite separate areas of the market like sports equipment.

In Virgin's case, part of the reason for this brand-first, product-later approach is historic.

The brand originally grew out Mr Branson's activities in the music industry, which were sold to EMI in 1992. Mr Branson's career since then has been devoted both to nurturing and developing the Virgin image, and to finding new businesses in which to exploit it. The only obvious failure so far has been with Virgin Trains, whose poor service quality has begun seriously to detract from the Virgin image elsewhere.

Most of these problems appear to have been inherited from British Rail, but enough of them are of Virgin's own making as to raise doubts about the quality of management more generally. Even so, none of this seems to me to warrant a blanket debunking of Mr Branson. When there's good cause for this, I will be among the first to pick up the pen. But in truth, Mr Branson is just a clever and accomplished entrepreneur. I suspect that one of the reasons he's getting a bad press is that very human thing - that we just love to build people up to knock them down.

We also still have a tendency in Britain to mistrust business success, even when it comes from someone as apparently userfriendly as Mr Branson. For all Mrs Thatcher's efforts, she failed to shift this antibusiness undercurrent in British culture. The fact that Mr Branson has done so much himself to change perceptions, and make entrepreneurialism something British people aspire to once more, is in itself an admirable

## Albert Fisher shares slump 20 per cent on profits warning

By Nigel Cope City Correspondent

THE TROUBLES at the food group Albert Fisher deepened vesterday when the company issued yet another profits warning, forcing the shares down to their lowest level since 1982.

The shares slumped 20 per cent to 26p when the company said its first-half profits would be lower than last year because of the strength of sterling and poor trading at its fresh produce and North American divisions.

In a further blow to investors, the potential buyer of the group's seafood operations has walked away, meaning the company will now be able to return only limited funds to sharehoped to sell the seafood business for around £100m.

Although talks had reached their final stages, the terms were affected by the current ban on imports of prawns from India. Albert Fisher is now expected to cut its dividend, which currently yields more than 14 per cent.

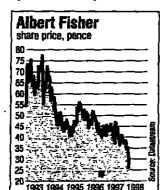
Analysts said the group could become a bid target again, either from an opportunist financial buyer or from Chiquita, the American banana

group which pulled out of bid talks last vear.

One analyst said: "I am speechless. What can you say about this company? Stephen Walls has been a disaster and his position had become

man who has failed to turn Albert Fisher around after five years, has stepped back to the position of non-executive chairman. He will receive an annual renumeration of £110,000 for just four or five days a month. "That is a disgrace," said one analyst.
"His tenure has been a disaster and he should have walked."

Albert Fisher shares have underperformed the market by more than 80 per cent since



Mr Walls took over the executive chairmanship five years ago. He had intended to stay on until the sale of the seafood business had been completed

along with the share buy-back.

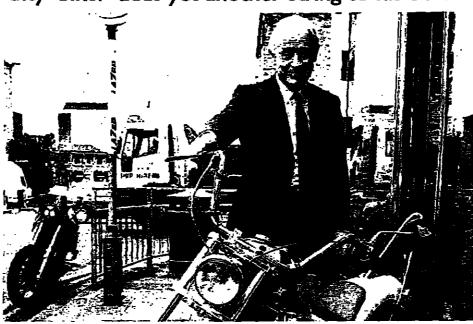
Neil England, who took over as chief executive a year ago, Mr Walls, the executive chairsaid: "It has been disappointing but the strategy remains unchanged - to move away from commodity ranges and towards higher-margin, added-value products and to spread risk while improving the quality of the management."

He denied the company was past saving: "Absolutely not. It can definitely be turned around, though some parts will take longer than others."

Analysts have reduced fullvear profit forecasts from £42m to £34m. The fresh produce division has been hit by higher than expected start-up costs of a new citrus venture in Uruguay. Its north American operations have been undergoing big management and operational changes and markets have been hit by high raw material prices.

lan Quinlan, finance director, has been made chairman of the group's north US operations and will spend much of his time there.

#### City 'biker' adds yet another string to his bow





Sir Adam Ridley, a keen violin player and motorbike rider, has joined the board of Leopold Joseph, the independent merchant bank. Sir Adam is better known in the City as chairman of the Equitas Trust and a member of the Council of Lloyd's, as well as being deputy Charities Board. He was a director of another merchant bank, Hambros Bank, from 1985 to 1997. Sir Adam, 55, was a special adviser to two Chancellors of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson and Sir Geoffrey Howe, and an economist at the central Policy Review Staff at No 10 Downing Street and at the Treasury. Educated at Eton and Oxford, Sir Adam has been chairman of Strauss Turnbull and a director of the 'Sunday Correspondent', as well as leading a host of other initiatives.

#### **BDB** snubs Murdoch in set-top box deal

BRITISH Digital Broadcasting (BDB), the terrestrial television group, tempted the wrath of pay TV giant BSkyB yesterday by awarding a key digital television technology contract to a Franco-German rival group. BDB said it had awarded the deal to supply the technology used in set-top boxes to un-scramble digital signals to SECA rather than News Datacom. which, like BSkyB, is a unit of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

BDB said it had chosen the group partly because its conditional access system was already in use in more than 1.5 million set-top boxes across Europe. BSkyB declined to comment despite reports that the broadcaster was preparing legal ac-

#### Surge in CWC connections

CABLE & Wireless Communications revealed a 42 per cent surge in the number of directly connected telephone customers to 901,000 between October and December, up from 636,000 compared to the same period a year earlier. The increase follows a £50m advertising campaign by the group, created through last year's merger of Mercury Communications with three cable operators. Some 24 per cent of homes passed by CWC cables have now switched to the telephony offering. up from 21.7 per cent.

#### Northern buys milk supplier

NORTHERN Foods has bought Woodgate Dairies, which supplies milk to supermarkets and smaller retail outlets, for £17m in cash. Woodgate, based in Uckfield, East Sussex, had a turnover ern said it intended to retain and develop the Uckfield facility as part of its Express Dairies Major Retail business. This business will become part of Express Dairies on completion of the proposed demerger of Northern's dairy business.

#### Drug group's shares plunge

SHARES in Core Group plunged by almost 40 per cent after the drug development company said two major drug products faced delays in testing. The company, which raised £23m in an initial public offering at 250p a share last March, said regulatory concerns prompted it to expand the scope of a clinical trial programme for Moraxen, a morphine-based pain killer for terminally ill patients. Shares closed at 118.5p, down 76.5p.

#### **GEC borrows in euros**

GEC, the defence electronics group, yesterday said it had has mandated eight banks to arrange a landmark 6 billion euro syndicated loan. GEC said it had instructed the banks to arrange and underwrite 6 billion euro of standby revolving credit facilities, which it said demonstrated GEC's "strong commitment to the European economy".

#### AEA buys Nycomed unit

AEA Technology, the nuclear waste and environmental cleanup company, is buying a unit of Anglo-Norwegian medical company Nycomed Amersham for £16.5m. Nycomed Amersham's Industrial Quality and Safety Assurance unit made a loss and of £1.6m for the six months to 30 September. AEA will pay £12.5m in cash and assume £4m liabilities for the unit.

#### COMPANY RESULTS Turnover & Pre-cax & EPS 8.23m (6.38m) -6.70m (0.397m) -13.2p (-1.1p) 20.13m (18.29m) 1.61m (0.937m) 12.8p (6.3p) nil Ranak Group (F) 2.01bn (2.08bn) 260.0m (65.0m) 26.6p (24.1p) 18.0p

(F) - Final (f) - Intecim (R) - Nine months

#### Rank defies critics with upbeat results

RANK, the Odeon to Butlins leisure conglomerate, yesterday claimed to be on the road to recovery after an awful few years which saw its share price plunge to new depths.

Rank defied its growing band of critics by announcing better than expected 1997 results. The group pleased investors by unveiling a rise in underlying pre-tax profits to £303m (£297m) and a 10 per cent jump in earnings per share, causing the shares to rise 9p to 340p.

Andrew Teare. Rank's embattled chief executive, said yesterday: "We are seeing the green shoots of recovery. Our

large investment programme is starting to work. It has been a huge job to get it right."

Mr Teare denied that he

was facing a management revolt in the wake of the departure of John Garret, head of the group's leisure business, and claimed there would be no further high-profile boardroom casualties: "The board are 100 per cent behind our strategy. The morale is good and our managers are very motivated."

Analysts pointed out that Mr Teare still had a lot of work to do to prove his reforms would be successful. Mark Finnie, leisure analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "There is a glimmer of light at

the end of the tunnel. There are still plenty of questions unanswered but they have bought themselves more time."

Rank's star performer was the Odeon cinema chain, where profits and attendances rose by more than a quarter thanks to films such as The Full Monty, which gave the industry its best year since 1974.

The buoyant British film industry has also prompted Rank to give Pinewood Studios a £10m facelift to increase its capacity by 30 per cent.

Rank is planning to accelerate the expansion of its Hard Rock Café chain. Yesterday it announced a deal with a US drinks group to produce a Hard Rock beer which will be

launched this spring. The Hard Rock record label, which has sold 120,000 albums in five months will be expanded. Rank is also looking to open 11 new Mecca bingo sites this year, which suggests it is unlikely to buy First Leisure's troubled bingo division.

But the US holiday business had another disappointing performance, as did Tom Cobleigh, which suffered from prolonged delays in new openings.

Rank signalled it was unlikely to launch another share buy-back this year.

The group confirmed it was unlikely to sell any other divisions and would concentrate on revitalising some of its tired brands.

#### Consumer confidence still higher than normal despite slight dip

CONSUMER confidence dipped slightly this month but remains at an unusually high level. Consumers have become slightly gloomier about the economic situation but they are still upbeat about the attractiveness of making major purchases, writes Diane Coyle.

The confidence index from the monthly survey carried out for the European Commission - a reasonably close guide to future growth in consumer spending - edged lower than January's level and is now some way below its midsummer peak. However, it stayed well above the long-term average, with the component indicating willing-

ness to buy big-ticket items remaining close to its recent peak. Separately, a comparison

of the whole gamut of monthly business surveys published yesterday by Merrill Lynch suggested that activity in the economy is probably stronger than official figures suggest.

For the final quarter of last year the official figures showed manufacturing output declining and growth in GDP slowing noticeably. However, business surveys all showed an increase in manufacturing production.

Ian Stewart, UK economist at Merrill Lynch, said there was a clear risk of upward revisions for the latter part of 1997.

#### WHO'S SUING WHO

JOHN WILLCOCK



A COMPANY owned by Harrods boss Mohamed Al Fayed is suing Heathrow Airport over the number of air landing "slots" allocated to aircraft likely to use the company's Executive Jet Centre at the airport.

A couple of years ago the Harrods group bought Hunting Business Aviation from Hunting Plc, and renamed it Metro

Last week Metro Business Aviation issued a writ against Heathrow Airport claiming damages over the number of short term slots allocated to the kind of air traffic which would use the Executive Jet Centre. The Centre is a maintenance depot which Metro has leased from the airport on the Southem Perimeter Road, Heathrow, since No-

vember 1995. Metro agreed to pay renton the Centre of £788,000 to Heathrow for the year to 30 November 1997, and then £1,075,000 a year until the 30 November 2002.

Metro was intending to use the Centre to provide engineering services to aircraft, such as overhaul and maintenance. Metro is claiming that after it had signed the lease for the Centre with Heathrow in 1995 Heathrow changed its policy about providing slots for the type of aircraft that might use the centre.

Metro's writ says: "The best estimate that the plaintiff can presently give is that by virtue of the existence and implementation to the defendant's policy by the end of 1997 approximately 20 per cent fewer aircraft were using the plaintiff's services than in 1995."

Metro's solicitors Davenport Lyons conclude that "the defendant has derogated from its grant." Mr Fayed's company is seeking damages and costs.

NORTHERN & SHELL, the publishing group run by chairman Richard Desmond, is suing New Group Newspapers, publisher of The Sun, over an article about Paula Yates in the 14th February paper headed "PAULA: I WILL NEVER TALK TO

Northern & Shell, whose titles include OK! Magazine, Penthouse and Asian Babes, is seeking an injunction to restrain News Group "from further infringing the plaintiff's copyright by publishing or authorising to be published in 'The Sun' or otherwise any substantial part of an article headed 'Paula Yates World Exclusive' published in issue 98 of OK! Magazine dated 20th February on the front cover and pages 22 to 43 inclusive and offered for sale on 14th Febraury 1998."

Mr Desomond's company is also seeking damages for infringement of copyright, damages for libel, and damages for slander "published by an employee of the defendant namely Andrew Coulson, acting in the course of his employment during a telephone conversation...on 14th February 1998."

Bizarre" showbiz gossip column. The lawyers acting for Northern & Shell aer Wiggin & Co of Cheltenham, Glouces-

ROVER GROUP is suing Innocenti Cooper Cars Ltd of Bexley, Kent, and a director of the same company, Michael Fernando, over use of the famous "Mini Cooper" name.

Back in the 'sixties the Italian firm Innocenti built a luxury version of the Rover Mini under license in Turin for the Italian market. Now Rover Group is trying to prevent a separate UK company, Innocenti Cooper Cars, from "passing off" cars under Rover group registered trade marks. Rover is also seeking an injunction to stop the company from using the names "Mini Cooper," "Innocenti Mini Cooper", or Innocenti Cooper."

Rover's writ, issued in the High Court last Monday, also demands that the defendants should disclose on Oath the number of cars in their possession which would come Mr Coulson is editor of The Sun's under the terms of the injunction, and the amount of money received as a result of their trade in such cars.

Rover has retained solicitors Martineau Johnson to pursue the case.

I CAME across a blast from the past in the Chancery writ room in the High Court this week, uncarthing a writ which last week was transferred in from the courts in Man-

It is the original writ issued four years ago by 198 investors against Grieg Middleton, the private client stockbroker, over an Entrerprise Zone Trust sponsored by the firm that went sour in the early 1990s.

The investors included one Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne, a well known footballer, who invested £25,000 in the london Docklands

property scheme. The losses suffered by investors led to the Securities and Futures Authority levying a fine of £100,000, its heaviest ever, against

Greig Middleton. Last September Grieg Middleton settled with the investors for an undisclosed sum. Quite why the writ has resurfaced in the London High Court, now that the whole thing is settled, is one of those strange foibles of the British system of justic.

JILLOSO DEL

London \*English I

Fashion week's fanfare for young Britain in Europe

By Tamsin Blanchard

LONDON Fashion Week fanfared its grand opening last night with a little help from the Foreign Office. Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Doug Henderson, minister for Europe, were due fashion pack, although many of the British designers invited to the European Young Designers Fashion Show were unable to attend. They were too busy with last-minute preparations for their shows which kick off officially this morning with Elspeth Gibson's first catwalk show.

"The UK's presidency of the European Union gives us an opportu- sense will benefit from the event renity to promote what is great about Europe," said Tony Blair. "Our connections with the rest of Europe are as Ozwald Boateng (tailor of choice not just about trade and markets, but for Peter Mandelson, minister withalso about stimulating cultural and out portfolio) and Timothy Everest artistic exchange."

The show last night was held to celebrate the presidency of the European more than any previous cabinet. Paul Union, with young designers from each of the member countries invit- culture and media task force, is aned to show on the catwalk. It was a other new Labour favourite. unique event - a fashionable version of the Eurovision Song Contest except that everyone last night was a winner. Representing the United Kingdom were Julien Macdonald, Matthew Williamson, and Seraph, the New Generation designers sponsored by Marks & Spencer last season.

Macdonald graduated from the Royal College of Art in 1996 and sold his graduation collection to the cial schedule. And there are the new Knightsbridge store, A La Mode. He names who have been enterprising shows his third collection on Tuesday enough to find sponsorship and put on night and continues to design knitwear for Karl Lagerfeld and Chanel.

tion last September made a splash of Northumbria. His label, Made in with just 11 outfits. He has been her- England, promises to cash in on the alded as one of London's most com- concept of Cool Britannia. The name mercial talents and already sells to A alone will ensure a following in Japan

Williamson and Macdonald will continue to be sponsored by Marks & Spencer for their shows this week. The sponsorship scheme was launched in 1993 and has helped Alexander Mc-Queen, Antonio Berardi and Clements Ribeiro.

Seraph is designed by Sherald Lamden, 34, who used to work for Tanya for a glamorous night out with the Same's Ghost Seraph sells to Liberty and Selfridges, as well as stores in Boston, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. As with most of Britain's young fashion talent, Seraph is very dependent on export sales, with about 60 per cent of business overseas. Shows from the rest of Europe included French labels, Eric Bergere and Veronique Leroy.

Whether the Government's dress mains to be seen, although the Cabinet already boasts designer labels such (worn by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown) which is probably about two Smith, a member of the Government's

Chris Smith admitted vesterday that: "I'm wearing a boring old M&S suit because I've come straight from the office." But, he added, "My tie is by Ozwald Boateng." Pressed as to the other designer names in his wardrobe, he said he also has ties by Paul Smith.

Deborah Milner, Paul Smith, and Tristan Webber have been given slots for the first time on the five-day offitheir own shows. Yesterday, four newcomers included Scott Henshall, a 22-Williamson's first catwalk collec- year-old graduate from the University





Young Britons on the European catwalk: Opening London Fashion Week last night were (main picture and above) Sheraid Lamden, who designs for the Seraph label; a Julien Macdonald (below) who shows his third collection on Tuesday; and Matthew Williamson (bottom), hailed as one of London's most commercial

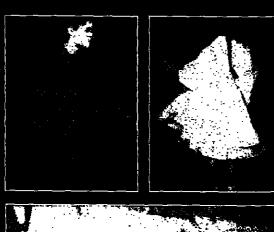
Main picture: Honor Fraser





The Independent

# Spring 98 special







Art and fashion are having a fling. Our 48-page fashion special gets you up to date with the latest from both worlds. Sarah Moon photographs this spring's newest looks in the spirit of the season's muse, Frida Kahlo. Go behind the scenes with Vivienne Westwood as she explains the inspiration behind her new advertising campaign. And see exclusive pictures by Richard Billingham, star of the Royal Academy's Sensation show.



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TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 21 February 1998

## Adrift in the Atlantic



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You cling to the edge of the known world, feeling like a player in the most hellish Wagnerian drama. Above, dark anvil-like clouds hammer against each other as they jostle for the privilege of drenching the tourist. Below, the steely Atlantic reaches the end of its unfettered run from the Americas by crashing angrily against impassively mighty rocks. Any minute now, you fear, the vol-cano that sprouts from the centre of La Palma is going to want to join in. Better get back to the bar. Luckily, there is a nearby scattering of spruce pastel dwellings beneath sturdy red roofs that remind you that you are still adjacent to civilisation. Hispanic style.

Whatever universe this island occupies, it has extraordinary properties. Often, you cannot tell when the ocean ends and the heavens begin, nor where the molten lead of the surf transmutes to the solidified lava of the shore, nor identify the point at which the rocky terrain melts Do a weary farm building. Land, sea and sky; nature and artifice - these merge together miraculously in Isla de La Palma, a forgotten little sister of the Canaries.

Imagine that a geological cataciysm has bestowed the Isle of Wight with a string of 7,000ft mountains, arranged in the manner of a question-mark through the centre of the island. The remodelled isle is then transported to a point 150 miles west of the Sahara, the furthest-flung of a family of seven. You can't get much more marginal than that. The second-smallest of the Canary Islands hangs to the volcanic skirts of its larger, more popular siblings. La Palma feels cast adrift, which for the visitor, is a wonderfully liberating feeling.

But first, you need to get there. You know the feeling when a journey has been such an ordeal that you just know you're not going to enjoy the destination? That was how I arrived in La Palma. You can't fly direct from Britain - which, say some, is part of its charm. So I flew from Gatwick to Tenerife's southern airport, ta Cruz de La Palma have picked up Latinesque touchand tried to connect with a flight departing from the northern airport.

After a horribly early start, a couple of cancelled busrand a £40 taxi ride, when I finally boarded the (inevitably delayed) plane to the island, I was fully expecting La Palma would feel more like a stressrelated illness than a paradise island.

The final approach sorted that out. The pilot came in from the north, providing a splendid flypast of an island that seemed to protrude from the sea like a giant, ragged emerald. A sharp U-turn swung us around for the landing, on a runway that sticks out from the side of La Palma in the manner usually reserved for aircraft carriers. This was clearly no ordinary island.

"Next time, you may want to take a taxi," smiled Gregorio as I climbed out of the car. He handed me a card that showed he was an off-duty cab driver. By day two, the unexpected drain on my finances had left me in no position to take taxis around the island, and I was hitching (embarrassingly successfully) to supplement the

swarse bus service around the island.

The buses, though rare, are cheap and reliable: between the capital, Santa Cruz, and the second town, Los Llanos, the cost is £2. The thousands of migratory birds that pause here would cover the journey in eight miles, but by tortuous road the trip takes more than an hour. If you want to make a success of a career selling power steering, set up in La Palma. The airport run-

way is the only straight stretch of Tarmac on the island. You soon get the hang of knowing instantly where you are with a single glance. Windswept plains tumbling into Marooned somewhere between the Sahara and South America. it's easy to lose yourself in La Palma, writes Simon Calder

the sea means Wagner country, the exposed west coast. More sheltered and gentle terrain, with the grey outlines of Tenerife and La Gomera rising offshore like whales, implies the east coast. And when you can't see beyond the end of your nose, you must be in the mountains.

La Palma's catchline is "The Green Island". In tourist-speak, "green" invariably means "wet". Bearing the brunt of 3.000 miles of Atlantic Ocean makes La Palma the dampest of the Canaries. Even if it's not raining at sea level, you can easily go upwards and check in to a cloud. I spent considerable time trying to reach the various miradores recommended as affording the finest views. But those argumentative clouds always came along for the ride, and I would return to Santa Cruz for the company of humans rather than cumulus.

La Palma has fewer people than the Isle of Wight, with just 80,000 inhabitants - a number exceeded on most days by tourists in neighbouring Tenerife. There are occasional charter flights from Germany, but as a tourist you are a relatively rare species in La Palma. So expect a more than usually generous welcome.

And once you start talking to people, you realise that you're not in Spain at all. For a start, the language has winningly lazy pronunciation, with none of the Castillian lisp. The suspicion that in fact you're on a misplaced speck of South America is increased when you leaf through the Canary Islands newspaper. Each of the seven islands is covered in turn, all the way down to the toddlers of La Palma and neighbouring Hierro. The next page is marked "La Octava Isla" - the eighth

island - and shows a map of Venezuela. Since 1492, the Canaries have been part of the New World, spiritually rather than geographically. You can fly direct to Caracas and Havana, the two cities with largest Canarian communities. And towns like Sanes, like the exquisitely elaborate galleries ambitiously applied to tall, handsome homes. A main street is named, in the Latin manner, after an obscure Irish adventurer: O'Daly (in Spanish-speaking America, O'Higgins and O'Reilly get namechecks). A replica of the Santa Maria, Columbus's vessel of discovery, is the closest that La Palma gets to a tacky tourist attraction. Walking around Santa Cruz is like rambling through a version of Old Havana where things actually work. There is an energy, an intensity, that you rarely find outside the inner core of Latin American capitals.

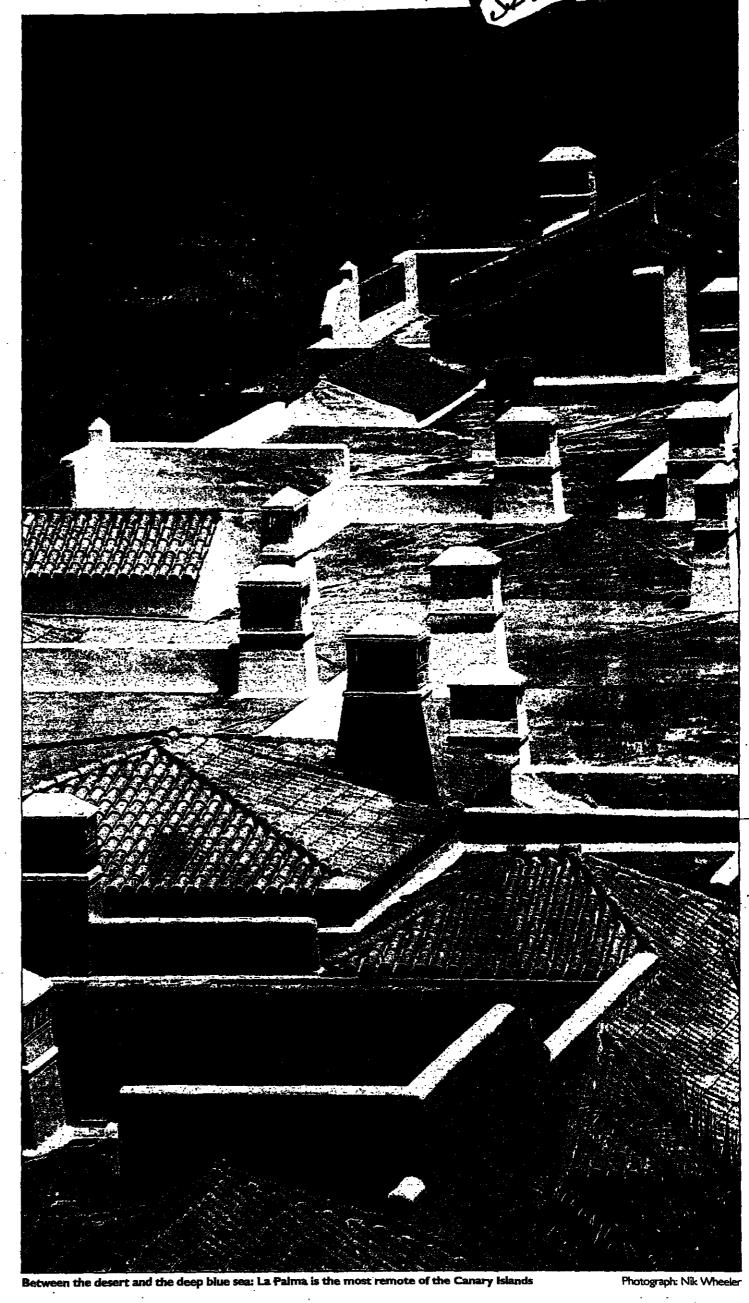
The wayward vibrance of La Palma is easier to reach than any of these distant lands. But only just.

**Getting there** 

The easiest way to reach the island is on a charter flight to Las Palmas, changing to a local flight or ferry. Simon Calder paid £230 for a five-day holiday in Tenerife with Thomson, including charter flights from Gatwick; he travelled on to La Palma on a flight operated by the airline Binter, which has frequent links between the Canary Islands. Fares, though, are high; the one-way ticket cost £40. The inter-island ferries are much cheaper; he sailed back to Tenerife for £10, including a berth. To hire Gregorio Diaz's taxi, dial 44 44 62.

More information

The best books about La Palma are the East and West Walking Guides by David and Ros Brawn. Spanish Tourist Office, 22-23 Manchester Square, London W1M 5AP (0171-486 8077; brochure-line 0891 669920).



INSIDE

o War

**ECLIPSE TRIPS** Where to miss the sun/9 SEVENTH HEAVEN

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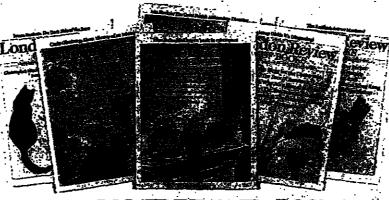
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London Review of Books ENGAGING THE MIND



## An isthmus tale

From the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean on the Tehuantepec line, with Hugh O'Shaughnessy



Weetman Pearson's legacy: scenes from the Tehuantepec line, above and below

Photograph: Bossemeyer/Bilderberg/Network

eller can turn down: a day-long train journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific with interesting travelling companions, traversing swamps, jungles and mountains, with a chance of observing Mexico unvarnished and at first hand, for the equivalent of £3.50. The service inexotic dishes and fresh fruit brought to your seat.

The Tehuantepec line, which was built in the 1890s by Weetman Pear-

whose lights and pipes were winking at us from across the water.

As I prompted, he dimly recalled the name of Weetman Pearson, later Lord Cowdray, engineer, oil man and founder of the Pearson empire - owner of the Financial Times - who came to this town to cludes newspapers and a series of put it on the map and make money. "He laid out Coatza and did it very well, you know. He was a good planner," said Rafael.

Pearson, a Huddersfield man son, later a British MP, goes from who was a genius at working out the Caribbean port of Coatzacoal- costings, arrived in 1896, having

goes round this country stealing goats and chickens." cos due south to Salina Cruz on the earned his fame by giving Mexico Pacific. It has more to offer than City, which was often under feet of Get to Coatza station any mornpesos and 50 cents at the cobwebbed ticket office which still contains some of Pearson's original office furniture, then walk a short way up the goods wagons, the whole brought up with a yellow caboose with two little lookout towers on the roof. You heave yourself aboard, and in the dark take your pick of battered

> morning's Diario del Istmo. Dead on 6.05am our train, halffilled with passengers, set off on the 302-kilometre journey to the Pacific, which was scheduled to take nine hours. I'd taken the precaution before leaving my hotel of vigorously emptying bowels and bladder, a sound idea given the smell coming out of the lavatory compartments. I had also brought food and water, though in view of what we were about to be offered, that was not so vital.

seats. Before the diesel growls into

life, a boy has come round with the

fully used by the Hawaiian cane farm-

that is sweeping the country, and

the horror stories that are com-

monplace in the capital, I asked

Rafael before we parted what pre-

cautions I should take against cut-

throats on the train the next

people who use it are so poor,

Given the violence and robbery

In the marshy meadows the horses were just beginning work, and children were playing round their palm-thatched huts. The maize fields were starting to show up green. Suddenly the carriage was filled with fresh and noisy young people in their Sunday best. "We're Seventh Day Adventists going to pray," said the girl ports on the river, which serve the no longer as vital or as profitable as who sat opposite me. "And that's in the time when it was the quickest our leader," she added, pointing

It's a bargain that no serious trav- Pajaritos, a tropical Rotterdam connection between the US East to a fat young woman in Girl me polite phrases in Zapoteco, over a brace of fine white chickens. Coast and California, and was grate-Guide uniform, sitting across the aisle. She simpered. Everybody ers to get their sugar to New York. seemed to be enjoying the journey for the simple reason that that is

what trains are about As we began to climb out of the swamp more industry appeared, a sulphur works with acres of vellow mineral tipped on to the sidings, then a cement works, spotlessly morning. He laughed. "There clean and obviously managed with aren't any robbers on that train. The fearsome efficiency.

The young Adventists alighted atthey've got nothing to steal. No one a halt as rapidly as they had arrived. They were replaced by a swarm of boys and women selling tacos, enchiladas, soft drinks, sweets, em- overtime," said my Zapotec friend preparing plans to develop a shiny ing of the week at 6am, pay your 42 panadas, bananas, oranges, and egg custards in little pots sprinkled with cinnamon. The fruit had been picked minutes before from trees that line the track. It is a well-retrack to two rickety carriages. These hearsed operation. The sellers all get are stuck behind a few motiey on at the same station and alight half an hour later, I couldn't discover how they got home. They would have had to wait hours for the train in the opposite direction.

> Then Fausto boarded. Only on the Tehuantepec railway could I have met Fausto. He is a 77-yearold Zapotec with a head such as you see carved in hundreds of prehistoric sites hereabouts. He had long since retired from his job as a telegraphist on the line; he showed me his rail pass with pride, and demonstrated that his wrist had lost none of its suppleness. His grandfather had worked on building the line, and he knew that "un inglés" had engineered it. Mexican railways weren't a patch on what they had been, he sighed. The sleeper from Mexico City to Mérida in the Yucatan was no more. The expresses had been abolished, as a povertystricken system was put up for privatisation. He tut-tutted as we passed ruined halts where he had once tapped out his message, but his eyes lit up when we came to Ix-

were still in good condition, with a plaque bearing the date 1911. As we rumbled along, he taught

tepec, where the station buildings

a fresh orange cut in half and flavoured the Mexican way with salt and chilli. Then talk turned to how Tony Blair was doing.

At Matías Romero we stopped, 90 kilometres short of our destination. I strolled on to the platform. looked at a 100-year-old steam monster silent beside the platform, and chatted to the engineers. "The locomotive needs changing. It mile or two down the coast. I went wasn't pulling," they explained.

I reported back to Fausto. "Don't you believe it. It's Sunday; no one much is travelling and the crew could do with two hours'

Then we came out of the mountains and into the Pacific plain. Just short of Salina Cruz, the train stopped. No railway building, no platform, just a rusty iron sign in the wilderness with the single word "Pearson". Weetman Pearson's jetties are still to be seen at Salina Cruz, hemmed in now by a container port and Mexico's largest oil refinery a

tractor over a couple of glasses of orange juice at a bar called the Hawaii. Rumours abound that the Mexican and US governments are

into town and thought of the con-



with an air of finality. I went back new railway, an eight-lane highway to my life of Nelson, and snoozed in the warm January sun. True to his prediction, the diesel returned

after two hours and we set off again. This stretch was magnificently mountainous and the line ran through deep cuttings where leathery bushes swept the windows. Then Fausto got off and a score of passengers boarded who had clearly been waiting for hours. "It's always like this. Sometimes the train comes half an hour early. But it's the only cheap way to travel from our village. There's no real road, and the minibuses cost a fortune," said one young woman. No one had goats or sheep on board, as Rafael had forecast, but one woman had and bigger oil pipelines across the isthmus, so that, when the Panama Canal stops being US property and reverts to the Panamanians at the end of this decade, there will be a reliable alternative in case of any trouble. The locals complain that they are told nothing, but must be secretly resigned to the fact that the distant powers up in Mexico City

seldom tell them anything anyway. Development like that would certainly bring some much-needed money to the deep south of the country - Mexico's impoverished, corrupt and violent equivalent of Sicily. But I think it would also endanger one of the best train rides on this planet.

#### MAKING FOR MEXICO .

Outward bound: there has never been such an excellent range of flights to Mexico, such low fares, and so many stopover possibilities. The best deals we have tracked down this week are as follows:

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Non-stop: British Airways to Mexico City from Gatwick (switching to Heathrow from the end of March). Through Trailfinders (0171-938 3366) you will pay £389 (including tax) until the end of March and between 11-30 April. You must stay at least a week and no more than six months. You can change the date of the return flight once, in Mexico, for a charge of £75. Children under 12 pay balf fare.

Via the US: from Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham and Manchester, through Quest Worldwide (0181-546 6000) you pay £369 for a Virgin Átlantic/ Continental flight via a city such as New York (Newark) or Houston. The fare is available until 31 March and between 14-30 April. You must stay at least one Saturday night, and a maximum of one month. The child fare is halfprice, if two adults are travelling together. A similar deal is available on American Airlines through discount agencies. With this fare, you can change your return date once in Mexico City for a charge of \$100

Via Amsterdam: from one of 20 points in the UK - from Aberdeen to Sheffield: £391 on KLM through Trailfinders. This is available until the end of March. You must stay between one week and three months. You can change your return date once for free once you're in Mexico.

Children travel for twothirds of the adult fare when travelling with an adult.

Charter flights: there are now numerous charters, mainly from Manchester and Gatwick, to the Mexican resorts of Cancun and Puerto Vallarta. (Note that many of these stop to refuel en route.) Charters are mostly sold as part of package holidays, by operators such as First Choice (0161-745 7000), Airtours (0541 500479) and Thomson (0990 502580). Some flights may have space for "seat only" customers; expect to pay around £250 return to Cancun, and slightly more to Puerto Vallarta.

Getting around: specialist travel agents such as Journey Latin America (0181-747 3108) and South American Experience (0171-976 5511) can sell flight tickets both to and within Mexico; air passes on Aeromexico and Mexicana are excellent value. To reach Oaxaca from the capital, you can fly in around an hour or take a bus on a journey

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(on a good day). Red tape: visitors require a tourist card, which is issued free by the airline when you embark or at the frontier if you enter by land. If you arrive by land from the US, it will be assumed that you are a day-tripper and no tourist card will be offered; you

must ask for one.

of about nine hours. The

overnight train takes 14 hours

More information: Mexican Ministry of Tourism, 60 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DS (0171-734 1058). Note that this office takes a substantial siesta, closing each day from 1.30pm to 3pm.

Victoria Rees



most of the world's railways but it makes its demands, and they include tolerance and patience.

I spent the evening before my journey in a style Graham Greene. who passed this way in the Eighties, would have envied. I drank coffee on the quayside with Rafael, the of his unpublished novel about the supreme wickedness of God. As he talked, he kept one eye on the vessel with its cargo of lorries, cars and passengers, watching its captain guiding it, in the gloom between the tugs and the supertankers, the kilometre across the black, deep Coatzacoalcos river. There are four giant oil refineries at Minatitian and

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putrid water for months on end, a decent drainage system. He had also constructed a real port at Veracruz, a thing that the Spaniards had never been able to do in colonial times. The Thatcher-like Mexican president of the day admired him, and got him to sort out ferry superintendent, as he told me an existing jerry-built line and construct the ports at each end which would make the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the second narrowest corridor on the American continent, a serious commercial rival for the Panama Canal that was being built at the time.

Pearson completed the railway, and it is in use to this day - though

page 18

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#### GREEN CHANNEL

Is it possible for travel to aid global cooling? Those ever-positive Americans have come up with a scheme that guarantees "guilt-free travel".

Agents and tour operators involved in the Global Cooling Trees for Travel scheme give customers certificates which confirm that seven trees have been planted for each

traveller. The logic is that a jet emits about 11 ounces of carbon dioxide for each passenger mile it flies, so over a 7,000-mile round trip from London to New York, every person on board will be responsible for about 5,000 pounds (more than two tons) of carbon dioxide. As a tree absorbs 50 pounds of the gas in a year, planting 10 trees will offset the carbon dioxide created during the flight over the course of 10 years.

Brits interested in the idea should link up with a tree-planting scheme in the UK, such as Woodlands Trust, which has a

"Plant a Tree for Cleaner Air" programme. You can work out how many you need to plant by following Trees for Travel's rough guidelines. They suggest planting at least one tree for every 4,000 miles travelled by plane. That tree offsets the carbon dioxide emitted by the aircraft, while two more trees would compensate for the greenhouse effect caused by the nitrogen oxide and water-vapour emissions.

Plant one tree for every 2,000 miles travelled by car, one for every 3.700 miles by train, another for every four days spent on a cruise ship and one for every 10,000 miles travelled by bus. Jet-skiers should

plant a tree after every 50th hour. If we all follow this advice we might cool the planet, but Trees for Travel doesn't mention whether we'd have any land left.

Trees for Travel web-site: www.treadlightly.com; Woodlands Trust 0800 026 9650. Sue Wheat



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# High plains drifter

If the chocolate moles don't tempt you, then the Mariachis surely will. Polli Kaminski escapes to the ancient, unspoilt gem of Oaxaca

"Well" said my friend, who had lived for some time in Africa, "I have eaten hippopotamus, so "by not mole?" We were skimming the menti in a Mexican restaurant. Mole in Mexico ("molay") is not, she was relieved to learn, a small black creature that digs up mounds in the lawn, but a delicacy that originates in the city of Oaxaca (pronounced "Wahaka") cities. Combine this with the air purity pein the heart of Mexico.

Streets around the main market here are crammed with mole shops, each selling its own style of this chocolaty, herby, spicy sauce, which is cooked up and served with chicken, turkey, beef or anything else you fancy. My favourite was a really rich plate of fried potatoes immersed in it. Once sense of being cut off from the world. you have got over the thrill of eating really fresh tages and mountains of gua- the coast in 1520, they brought with them camole with refried beans, it becomes clear architecture typical of southern Europe, that the cuisine of Mexico, while interesting which can still be seen in the heart of the in the composition of some dishes (huevos city. Large, noble buildings are painted in and cafés, ostensibly selling bits of carved rancheros, for instance - fried eggs on a bed earthy colours - sand red, othre and stone wood or ribbons. The best thing to do is of spicy green salsa), is not blessed with - and adorned with wrought-iron bal- to let them eat your tacos and salsa, and infinite variety. Mole, which gives Mexiconies crammed with pots of trailing flow-give them bread and butter from your table. can food that small note of individuality, ers. Through huge wooden doors, high Even the poorest give to the poor in Oaxcan also contribute to a person's status, courtyards are massed with tumbling and aca. And poverty is here in plenty. as can be seen in the recipes specially creeping greenery. Regal stone staircases

made up for important Oaxacan families.

Apart from this unusual little delicacy, Oaxaca can boast of being possibly the most beautiful city in Mexico. High on the plains in the heart of Oaxaca state, 300 miles south-east of Mexico City, it shines with a light similar to that in Mediterranean culiar to high altitude and minimal industry, and the effect is stupefying.

Oaxaca is built on a grid system similar to that of New York, but is a fraction of the size; at the end of every long, straight street the city disappears and fresh green hills rise up, leaving you with a disconcerting

When the Spanish moved inland from

lead up to cool and shady rooms where quiet voices echo intriguingly.

All streets eventually lead to the zocalo. or main square, the heart of every city in Mexico. But Oaxaca's is different. It is bordered on one side by a flowery, Rococo-style church and on all other sides is crowded with café and restaurants, their chairs and tables laid out invitingly in the sun or tucked shyly way in the shade of arched walkways.

ally around midnight.

play quite badly and sing slightly out of tune,

but have masses of charm. And, oh, those

trousers ... Low at the hip, flared at the foot,

In lush gardens at the heart of the square looms the bandstand, a stage for the talents of earnest young people and practised adults who proudly play on Sunday afternoons and saints' days: Everyone congregates in the zocalo: children play, plots are laid, and business deals are negotiated in the shade of the trees.

On the borders, beggars and street urchins do their rounds of the restaurants

When darkness falls, the music starts up



كذا من ألاصل

and every café on the zocalo bursts into each side and silver-studded belts, they are uniform to the Mariachis but coveted by sound, each one offering a different style.

Young people with extraordinary talent play just about every female tourist in Mexico. guitars, pipes, accordions. Others sing. Close by the zocalo is the other centre Whatever their chosen skill, their presence Oaxaca, the covered market - a place of loud voices and bright colours. Everyis magical, and the square becomes sadly empty when they finish for the night - usuthing can be bought here, from dustbins to leather handbags, and there is a stall selling fruit and vegetable juices where you can When wailing and strumming starts up realise your barmiest recipes: coconut and around the square, you know the Mariachis have arrived - groups of local players and singers, romantic buskers who invariably mango, carrot and guava, and more.

It would be reckless to visit Oaxaca and to miss the magnificent site of Monte Alban. Set on a hilltop about six miles from with silver studs from waist to ankle down pre-Hispanic ruins in Mexico. It was once ber, Tumba 104.

the Zapotec capital, and archaeologists have dated its origins to 500BC. Most of the ruins existing today, however, date from AD300-750. The technology required to design and build such a huge complex, which housed a highly organised society, is staggering.

Many treasures were plundered over the centuries, but in 1932 Dr Alfonso Caso discovered Mixtec treasures that had been buried in tombs. Some of these can be seen in the modern museum at the entrance to the site. Meanwhile, if you feel like experiencing life as a true Mexican the city, it is one of the most important mole you can visit the vaulted burial cham-

#### Viva Oaxaca, Vivaaaa!

Andrew Marshall remembers a night of 'purest uncut Mexico', high on mezcal, heady with the old revolution



Mayan statue near Oaxaca

Ten years ago I went to Mexico to write an economic survey. It was at a time when this brittle and complex country was starting to pull itself together as the debt crisis waned and reform took hold. It was a good story for a journalist. Mexico City was fun, though it was hard work and filthy, and I found it a constant struggle to keep on schedule. But Oaxaca was something else. It gave me a night that I shall never forget, a night of purest uncut Mexico.

I was lucky enough to be in Oaxaca for the Grito, the annual celebration of the first call to revolution. All day, the people gathered in the zocalo: quiet, besuited local worthies, bemused (and increasingly drunk, in many cases) Indians, and the ever-present backpackers. I grabbed a table at a pavement café, sipng the dark Bohemia beer that is a thousand times better than any bottle of something-or-other with a chunk of lime in it. As darkness fell, I switched to mez-

cal, the murderous spirit that has done for so many good men.

Then the officials turned up. First came the local soldiery, with rifles bigger than them, belinets slipping over their eyes, and ill-fitting uniforms. They stood around the square looking nervous, as well they might in a part of the country where the state still has only a fragile hold on parts of the countryside. Then came the more serious guys, with automatic weapons and

steely-eyed stares. Lastly, the armoured

cavalcade escorting the Governor poured

into the square with sirens blazing. The Governor came on to the balcony of his colonial-era palace, and launched the traditional call-and-response with the waiting crowd. "Viva Benito Juarez," he cried. And they roared back: "Viva!" "Viva el Presidente!"

"Vîva!" "Viva Mexico!"

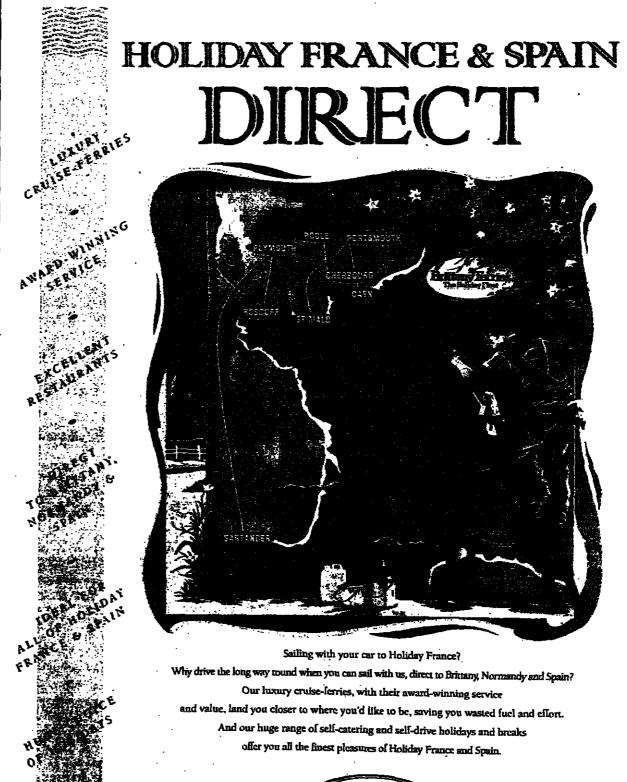
And so it went on, late into the night, as the beers and the mezcal mounted up. In the small hours, I stumbled back to my hotel, the lavish Presidente, and crashed

What a place to awake. Its whitewashed walls, the calm, dark, green and damp courtyards, the timbered rooms and the quiet corridors made it one of the best places I have ever nursed a hangover. I slumbered through the morning, woken only by a light earth tremor that did nothing for my composure.

I spent the afternoon wandering the dusty, drowsy streets of the city, exploring the churches and the museum dedicated to Benito Juarez. His name is little known outside Mexico, yet he is one of the founding fathers of this Byzantine state and its permanent crusade against colonialism, dependency and the church. Here, he is a secular saint of the revolution.

Graham Greene charted this territory in The Lawless Roads, a survey which he wrote in the Thirties on the crushing of the church in Mexico. When he visited Oaxaca, the revolution was not long past, and he painted a vivid picture of a city under virtual occupation. One large convent, he wrote, had been turned into a barracks by the army, their horses stabled in the cells and the courtyards. I discovered, with a bit of careful reading and some sleuthing, that this convent was now the hotel Presidente.

In the cathedral, which was long ago restored to worship, I admired the elaborate paintings and carved statues that go with the church in a country where the older religions have quietly fused with Catholicism. And while I was there, a woman broke into song from one of the side chapels, a song which was so beautiful I could not stop myself from seeking her out. She knelt on the floor, singing her heart out, 80 if she was a day, and full of fierce devotion. And though I am not religious, I could not help but recall the old saw about poor Mexico: so far from God, so close to the Unit-



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261421 AITO ATOL 2787 ASTA Jon Winter goes on a musical tour with an undertone of violence

Anyone who imagines Scottish Highland music as a rather dreary, overly nostalgic genre should consider the content of "Ann Bron Binn", an ancient Gaelic ballad. It recounts the tale of a chap named Arthur who succumbs to the enchanting harpplaying of a beautiful young woman, eventually falling asleep with his head in her lap. Seizing upon his vulnerability, the beautiful woman swaps her harp for a sword and, for reasons that are unclear, lops off his head. Forget All Saints and the Spice Girls, that is Girl Power.

Learning of such savagely romantic ditties is just part of the conversion that cynics undergo when they visit Balnain House in Inverness, the selfproclaimed "Home of Highland Music\*. Situated in a handsome Georgian mansion on the banks of the River Ness, Balnain House is not just for folk enthusiasts. Visitors of every musical orientation are invited to embark on an brief interactive, audiovisual tour of Highland music.

Your hearing is first introduced to the primitive tones of ringing rocks and droning battle horns popular around 2,000 years ago. To modern ears, these early instruments might sound harmoniously challenged, but when backed with a recording of the wind or the ocean, they combine to make extraordinarily haunting music.

Visitors then continue through a series of themed listening stations, each equipped with headphones, where a selection of tracks can be listened to as you absorb the accompanying written information.

It quickly becomes apparent that far from being inspired by quaint sentimentalities, much of the music has its roots in war, religion and the rigours of everyday life in the Highlands. One area focuses solely on work and communal songs "whose primary function was to increase work efficiency and maintain concentration by providing a steady rhythm". Plug in here and you can listen to, among others, butter churning melodies, spinning ditties and "baulking" (shrinking) tweed

For my ears, though, some of the more beguiling tunes were those from Orkney and Shetland - eerie, monastic-sounding choral singing, and jaunty fishermen's songs for attracting seals, who have for a long Jime been thought to respond to such

music. Although for the main part the

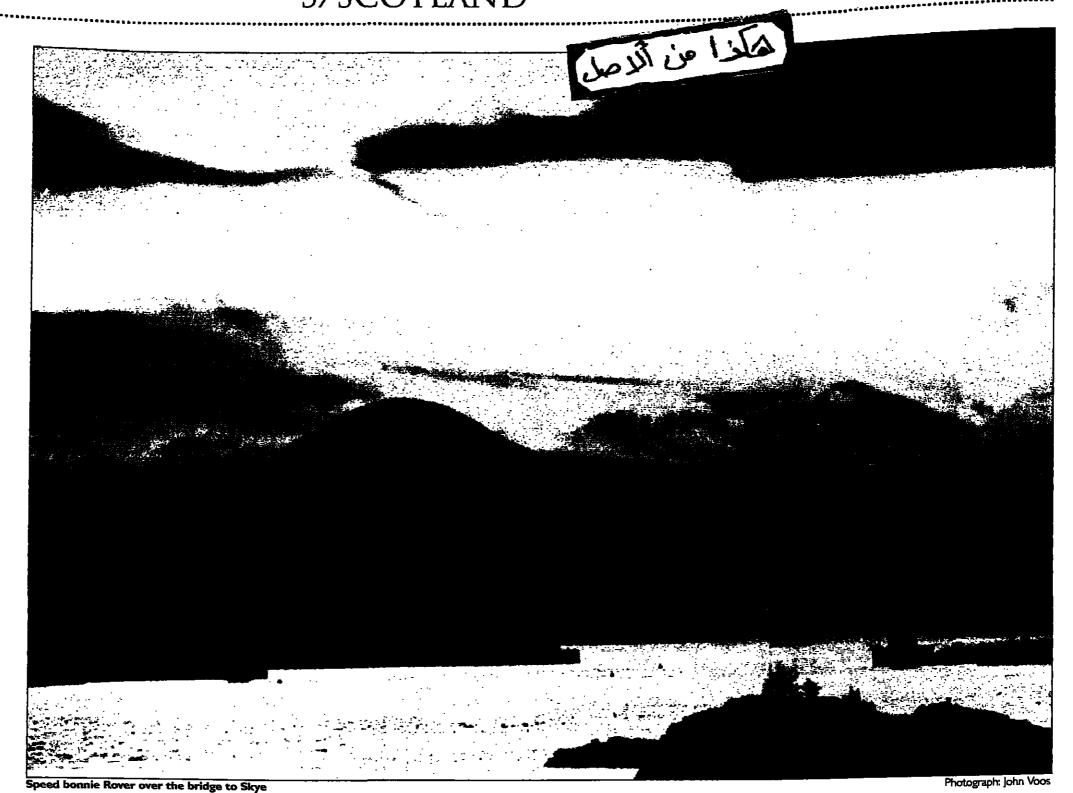


exhibition may seem to dwell in the past. Balnain House is no museum. If fact, any restrained museum-like ambience is likely to be kicked out by a dance class enthusiastically stamping their feet on the ceiling above you, or by the reels and jigs of an impromptu music session drifting up from the café in the basement. "Cultural centre" is perhaps a more accurate label, a viewpoint reinforced by the noticeboard in the foyer, which is crowded with advertisements for dance classes, instrument tuition, festivals, pub gigs, ceilidhs, instruments for sale and even weekend harp-making courses.

Whatever you make of a visit to Balnain House, arguably the most memorable moment for most visitors is the opportunity to test your musical talents on a number of traditional instruments (including several enchanting harps) on hand around the exhibition. Thankfully, today's visitors have little to fear from homicidal harp-players, but when a group of inquisitive tourists find the bagpipes, you just have to run for your life.

Balnain House, 40 Huntly Street, Inverness IV3 5HR (01463 715757). Admission: adults, £2; over-60s, students and unemployed, £1.50; children under 16, 50p. Opening times: 10am-5pm Tuesdays to Saturdays. session night on Thursdays. The Shop contains a wide range of books, CDs, written music, instruments and other learning materials. Fresh Scottish fare, seafood and vegetarian specialities feature on the menu in Cafe Balnain.

S CLAS



## Highlands minus the tartan tat

At this time of year the Highlands of Scotland are peopled by strange folk wearing shiny plastic boots who look up with frowns at a shining sun but will welcome any leaden, snow-laden clouds that might coax an at-best diffident skiing season into March.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the winter sports fraternity have the place to themselves the toilets and even many pubs stay cold, closed down as if every day was like Sunday, their shuttered faces blindly awaiting the hordes of holidaymakers from around the world who will descend with the midges when the weather warms up.

I ended up there by simple accident, really. First, let me say something about timeshare. It can be a great way of getting holiday accommodation, where you trade your week in one part of the world for someone else's in another. But the system creaks noisily when it comes to British holiday destinations, and when we came to trade in our time in Florida for something closer to home it was neither close to our London home nor a very attractive prospect: the Scottish Highlands in February.

And as "Auntie", our 39-year-old Rover, lumbered up the A9, the snow started to fall and we only just got to our first stop, at Laggan, a few miles from Loch Ness along the Great Glen, before the blizzard set in. Next morning, the ski set looked happy setting out in their minibus for Aonach Mor, and Loch Lochy looked pretty becoming - extending a wintry welcome to two people and their dogs out for a walk in the snow.

That was it for snowfall (though some is forecast

'Scotland in February? You must be mad,' they told **Bob Carter**. But it pays to take the high road without the tourists in tow

for this weekend); but the walking, especially around corners of the country where, wrapped up warm life of some fluffy Scottish mammal or other.

motoring sounds so much nicer than driving? Motoring means that as you trundle over the twisting, turning road from Invergarry to Loch Alsh through Glen Shiel you stop to take in the view of miles of white peaks stretching to the distance as you suddenly find yourself in what seems like familiar territory.

Where once the Kyle of Lochalsh brought to mind the Skye Boat Song, there is a bridge there now and a car park where tacitum locals cast an eve over my 1950s bank manager's car and refused to be impressed. But they have seen a lot lately, living in a place where the scenery plays host to images of a dope-smoking policeman.

This is Hamish Macbeth country, where the tourists teem in summer. Happily, as with so much in the area at this time of year, we had Plockton to ourselves, and ves, it is just how it looks on the TV: squat Scottish cottages in pink and white lining a placid harbour where small fishing boats bob

as only Scottish fishing boats can. Once on the west coast, there are other quiet

Loch Ness, remained a delight as the ice at the lower and snug, we would snugly stop to take in our level melted away from the snowdrops in a manner exclusive view. At Arisaig, whence Bonnie Prince now. The normal tourist traps, the visitor centres, reminiscent of a natural history film of a year in the Charlie is said finally to have sailed off into exile, there is a stone cairn, in February a quiet spot to ne motoring again. Isn't it strange how out to find out who was stopping at such a strange

> time of year. It was even stranger in the seaside resort of Oban, where the watery late winter (or was it early spring?) sunshine also tempted out the odd bather. Or rather a boy in swimming trunks was being almost forced into the water by his parents. I guess that's how they get them toughened up in

> Those lonely roads and those empty glens were in such contrast to my previous experience of this area, a decade before, in August. My chief memory from then is of crowded camp-sites and a view, when driving, of coach company logos from Bonn and The Hague on the backs of those lumbering tourist hells-on-wheels. It really does pay to take the high road when nobody else is doing so.

Halfway through our fortnight we travelled down the A9 - the only road I know to have had its own commemorative postcard, which of course invites you to burst into McGonagall verse:

Oooooh, it's a wonderful road, the Old A9, It runs down Scotland in a wiggly line.

We followed it down to Kinloch Rannoch, the very heart of Scottish shortbread and tartan tourist country with the picturesque pass of Killiecrankie (deserted), Pitlochry (almost deserted, with almost desperation prices in the shops) and Queen's View over Loch Tummel where we watched the sun go down, setting the loch on fire, a view crowded with tourists in the summer but, again, an experience on that day shared by just the two of us.

From that spot you can just see the top of the With the spring sunshine glinting off the snow, stop for a sandwich, so quiet that an otter came one mountain we did go up, Schiehallion, 1,083m above sea level, where mud on the lower slopes made way for up to a foot of old snow at the top. carved into curious shapes by the winter wind but in places untouched by human foot, a bit of a contrast to Ben Nevis where packed ice from too many boots made the going too treacherous. The mountain glared down through the mist daring us to come and have a go if we thought we were hard enough. We weren't and didn't.

The search for true solitude reached its successful conclusion on the marshy expanse of Rannoch Moor, proudly described as Europe's largest wilderness area. You drive from the hotel on Loch Rannoch to where the B846 peters out by Rannoch station and then set off along the side of Loch Laidon. Pretty soon the only sound is the wind and the birds and you can imagine the moor stretching off into infinity. It is lonely enough to send you a little bit mad, but then wasn't that what everybody said when we told them we were driving from London to the Highlands in a 1959 Rover in the

bitter days between New Year and spring. "Scotland in February? You must be mad."

#### Sea spray and superstition in old East Neuk

Traditional seafaring life still clings to the battered coast of Fife, as Alison Thomas found

It's the sound of the sea that draws you back to the East Neuk of Fife. Even on a calm day its murmurings and whisperings are everywhere. And when storm clouds gather, it charges in like a wild beast, hurling massive sheets of swirling spray over the high sea walls, drenching the streets of the villages, splashing the very doorsteps of the houses that huddle by the

shores of the Firth of Forth. Small wonder that the East Neuk fishermen have always been fiercely superstitious. Although modern technology has made boats safer, old taboos linger on. Rabbits, pigs, hares, the very mention of their names can

provoke the monster's wrath. But the day we walked along the coastal path from Anstruther to Pittenweem, its mood was benign. The winter sunshine laid a golden trail that danced and shimmered on the water, and only the occasional momentary feather of spray drifting

across Anstruther's outermost pier gave any hint of its latent power.

It wasn't far to walk, but with a nine-year-old in tow there were rocks to climb and shiny pebbles to gather and anyway, why hurry? It was several hours before we made it up the steep cliff path and down the other side to Pittenweem harbour. We arrived in time to watch a fishing boat carefully manoeuvre its way through the narrow entrance, a scattering of noisy gulls circling overhead as if piloting her home. Another had already slipped safely inside and the crew was preparing to land.

East Neuk fishermen are a hardy breed. Once you could watch them at work in other harbours along the coast. Now only in Pittenweem do you catch a glimpse of a disappearing world. Yet the East Neuk remains a close-knit community, and a surprising number of fishermen still live here, even those who sail from Aberdeen, almost 100 miles away. Watson, Gourlay, Murray - the names of the crews today are the same as those on the lichen-covered tombstones of the spray-drenched kirkyards.

And the past lingers on. You see it in the colour-washed houses, their red pantiled roofs and crowstepped gables a legacy of the days when the East

Neuk was an important European trading centre and vessels from the Low Countries brought in pantiles as ballast. You feel it, too, in the seacaves, home to monks and hermits over a thousand years ago, and on the rocky shore where smugglers once unloaded their booty.

Each village retains its own sturdy individuality. Anstruther, its feet planted firmly on the ground, is the homely, purposeful one. Crail has a more comely air, with its handsome merchant houses, tranquil streets and picture-book harbour, whose ancient stone walls curl round protectively, embracing the boats that shelter there. Pittenweem is characterised by the bustle of the fleet and the steepest, narrowest "wynds" of all the coastal towns. In St Monans, too, houses jostle untidily from the high ground to the shore and its church crouches squat and defiant so close to the water that when the tide runs high the surge of the surf mingles with the hymns.

The sound of the sea was with us too when we visited a friend in her low-cellinged cottage on Anstruther's Esplanade. To the front lay the estuary, where stepping stones lead at low tide to Castle Street beach and the centre of town. To the back, we looked out over the high wall of her brine-

splashed garden to the waters of the Forth beyond. We didn't worry when our son disappeared, for we knew where to find him. When sand, sea and rock pools are a quick clamber over the sea wall away, where else would a nine-year-old go?

It is the sea that has given the East Neuk its rich historical heritage and a succession of colourful heroes. Like Andrew Wilson, the notorious 18thcentury smuggler whose execution in Edinburgh's Grassmarket led to the Porteous Riots. Or Captains Alexander Rodger and John Keay, whose thrilling finish in the great tea clipper race of 1866 made national headlines. Or William Smith, Arctic explorer and whaling skipper, who brought back to his native Cellardyke the gigantic jawbone of the largest whale ever caught off the Greenland coast. The whaling trade may be a thing

of the past, but when we wanted firm. tasty haddock we didn't have far to go, although it was fortunate for us that the tourist season was over. Anstruther Fish Bar has quite a reputation. Throughout the summer people come from far afield, willing to queue for an hour or more in the chilly east wind of Shore Street. When your meal left Pittenweem fishmarket only that morning, it bears as much relation to the

flaccid, greasy fare of the average chip shop as a freshly-picked tomato to its tinned counterpart.

Tucked away behind the Scottish Fisheries museum, in the buildings of an old smoke house and cooperage, we found a seafood establishment of a very different kind. With its sophisticated menu, including hot canapés with your aperitif and petits fours with your coffee, the Cellar Restaurant seemed an unlikely venue for the down-to-earth folk of Anstruther.

But this little corner of Fife is surprisingly cosmopolitan. Elie, with its golf courses and its pleasure boats, is where the gentry live, or in the peaceful farming communities inland. And only 10 miles away lies the ancient town of St Andrews. Its university attracts the well-heeled offspring of Middle England, its Old Course lures golfers from all over the world, and its beguiling combination of cloister, golf and gown make it a popular retirement home for world-weary city dwellers.

Ten miles. A 15-minute drive. Another world.

Tourist Information, 70 Market Street, St Andrews (01334 472021). The Cellar, 24 East Green, Anstruther (01333 310378). Anstruther Fish Bar, 17 Shore Street (01333 310518).

## 48 hours in South Tyneside

The 'Angel of the North' sculpture has thrust attention on Gateshead and its surroundings. Simon Calder checks out the prospects for a weekend break south of the Tyne

Why go now?

Because the vast span of the new Angel is already a tourist attraction. Because no one that I know has been for a weekend break in South Tyneside. And because if and when you need some big city life, Newcastle is just a bridge away.

Beam down

Virgin Trains and GNER bring you from most parts of the kingdom direct to Newcastle. I paid £29 return for the three-hour run from London on GNER, booked in advance on 0345 225225. For other fares and timings, call National Rail Enquiries on 0345 484950. From Newcastle Central station you can walk across to Gateshead or take the highly efficient Metro railway.

Get your bearings
A series of settlements is strung out along the south bank of the Tyne. The most important and sprawling is Gateshead, directly south of Newcastle. Going east from here, you pass though Felling, Hebburn and Jarrow. The Metro runs between Gateshead and these communities every eight minutes during the day.

Gateshead must be expecting a flood of visitors, because it has two tourist information bureaux in the Central Library on Prince Consort Road (0191-477 3478) and in the MetroCentre (0191-460 6345).

Finding a place to sleep is more of a problem in South Tyneside than in other weekend break destinations. The MetroCentre Marriott (0191-493 2233) feels like an airport hotel in search of an airport, but has a weekend special on Friday. Saturday or Sunday night of £57 single/£64 double. The Riverside Lodge, on the south bank of the Tyne at Felling (0191-495 0282), is difficult to reach without a car, but has a good week-end rate of £33.50 single/£43.50 double.

Take a ride

Centre sweeps you regally across the Tyne, country park. then swerves to the right (affording a glimpse of an angel) and trundles along to 'Europe's biggest covered shopping and leisure complex". Inside is a fully-fledged funfair. A roller-coaster ride costs £1.80.

Window shopping

one-stop shopping experience includes Square. After three bracing miles you reach exhibition called Made in Guteshead, which noon, the Angel of the North will be a huge



Angel of mercy: if the sculpture continues to draw tourists to the area, a cheerler chapter looks certain for South Tyneside

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touches such as a "Mediterranean village" and team shops for both of the local soccer rivals, Newcastle and Sunderland. No wonder so many of the shops elsewhere on South Tyneside are boarded up.

Clutching your new Sunderland away kit (and possibly your jaw; the MetroCentre also has an on-site dentist), you can quickly escape to one of the most beautiful corners ... to a ride. The seven-minute train trip of the North-east. Walk through the village between Newcastle Central and the Metro- of Swalwell to the start of Derwent Walk

An old railway line leads you gently upwards through an increasingly dramatic valley, carved out by the river Derwent. The first part is prettily wooded. Then a viaduct ushers you across the river and into spectacular open country. You can't see the Angel from here but to compensate, one The MetroCentre resembles a cross be- proprietor of Gibside Hall has built a coltween Center Parcs and a high street. This umn on the scale of Nelson's in Trafalgar

a bus back from here, or bear left along the road to the village of Sheep Hill, taking you up a steep and shady valley.

Lunch on the run

Back in Gateshead town centre, the options are limited. M&M's fish & chip shop, on the corner of High Street and Park Lane, promises: "We're not famous, but we are the best." After a scrumptious and satisfying cod and chips (£2.40), I agree.

Cultural afternoon

My ancient guidebook notes that South Typeside has "extensive populated and industrial areas, with some collieries". When Gateshead was rich and famous, the town created suitably grand municipal buildings. The exterior of the Shipley Art Gallery (on Prince Consort Road; 0191-477 1495) maintains an air of prosperity. Inside, the story of the town is revealed in a striking

the village of Rowland's Gill. Either take painfully traces the decline of heavy industry success in drawing tourists to South Tyneand consequent social vacuum that afflicts side. From a distance, the sculpture remuch of South Tyneside.

An aperitif

Jarrow has a similarly imposing collection of civic architecture, notably the fiercely redbrick town hall. A plaque on the wall commemorates a defining moment in 20th century British history: "the Jarrow Crusade of October 5th, 1936". At the height of the Depression, thousands of unemployed men set out to march to London to demand work and dignity. Drink to the human spirit at the Jarrow Crusaders, a Vaux pub behind the town hall.

Demure dinner Go to Newcastle.

Angel of the morning

Judging by the crowds around Antony Gormiey's sculpture on Wednesday aftersembles an upturned Spitfire. The closer you get, the more you appreciate the warm (if a little rosty) welcome from open

arms 175ft across. Unless you are travelling by road along the A1, finding the figure can be difficult. It is perched beside the Durham Road four reached by bus 1, 21, 25, 26 among others.

Sunday afternoon: go to church

Bede's World sounds alarmingly like an station that bears the historian's name is erable pigs - the Tyneside Two? buried amidst an industrial park east of Jar-Sundays, it keeps maddeningly short opening times (2.30-5.30pm). Yet once you reach it, grumpiness evaporates.

The Venerable Bede lived, wrote and died in the confines of St Paul's monastery. for the area.

The present-day church embraces its foundations and even some Roman masonry -Watling Street ended on the south bank of the Tyne. Uphill from the church, you enter fine old Jarrow Hall, where the life of the writer of Historia Ecclesiastical Gentis Anglorum is placed in the context of a turbulent time around AD700. (You also learn that Bede was largely responsible for counting miles south of Gateshead town centre, years from the birth of Christ; he deserves a mention in the Millennium Dome.)

Adjacent, in a most unlikely location, between giant chemical storage tanks and a parade of pylons, an Anglo-Saxon village ecclesiastical version of the MetroCentre. has been created, complete with 20th-cen-It is irritatingly difficult to find: the Metro tury wattle and daub, and a couple of ven-

The visitor is bound to note the contrast row, almost a mile from Bede's World. On between the vitality of this made-up village and the dereliction that abounds outside. But if the Angel of the North can draw people to South Tyneside, tourism may mark the beginning of a new and cheerier chapter

#### Hanging's too good for 'em

Nottingham's Galleries of Justice offer flogging, branding, the pillory and the stocks. Louise Duffield braved the dungeons

Hanging, transportation, solitary confinement, branding with a hot iron you see it all at the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham. The former Shire Hall and county gaol in the city's Lace Market area has been turned into a museum dedicated to crime, punishment and law.

The current Condemned! exhibition takes visitors through the days when petty theft could mean years in a filthy prison, and when arson and rioting could lead to hanging. Indeed, the graphic reconstruction of the dubious trial of George Beck for his part in the 1831 Reform Bill riots in the splendid original criminal court room shows how unjust justice can be.

From there, visitors - each bearing a different prisoner number - are sent down to the cold cells to be confronted by gaolers and "punished" for their crimes. They experience the hell holes that were prisons, what it was like to be transported to Australia, and such punishments as the stocks and the pillory. The small exercise yard, still bearing the engravings of condemned criminals, contains a fullsize working gallows.

The Galleries bring ideas about punishment right up to date with a thought-provoking and hard-hitting exhibition on hanging - which visitors can avoid if they choose - and suggestions about dealing with criminals in the future. Over the next 17 months the Galleries of Justice will continue to expand, adding new police galleries based in the original 1905 police station, revamped and extended crime and punishment galleries, and discovery galleries centring on civil law. The eventual aim is for it to become the National Museum of Law.

The visitors Gill Davis, a nursery teacher from



Derby, went to the Galleries of Justice with her daughter Anna. 14, and son Tom, 11.

Gill: There was a lot more there than I

thought. I didn't realise we would be going down into the cells beneath. I liked the way we were given our own prisoner numbers and we became part of the system, so that the law process happened to us. It made it personal, The bits where there was sound and video were good in intermittently taking you away from all the reading. You need those bits to break it up. There is a lot of information to read - so children coming here need quite a high level of literacy. Some of the exhibitions would be quite frightening for very young children.

The atmosphere was very good in the court room and cells. The staff who were dressed as gaolers and court officials were highly convincing. I think the Galleries of Justice pro-

vide a good balance between guides and areas where you wander at your own speed. There's plenty to see and do, and I would definitely come back again. You can be in there for quite a while, but when the extra bit opens it will be a full day.

Anna: I thought it was very realistic. The bit about hanging really sticks in your mind. It might be a bit scary for small children but you are given the choice of whether you want to walk that way or not. The guard was very intimidating and makes you feel as if you're a prisoner. I felt I learnt quite a lot about some of the punishments that were given over history, and also that sometimes people's punishments did not fit the crime, but they were just made an example of.

Tom: It was very interesting and realistic in the way they did the court scenes. It was strict. I knew that some

of the punishments were harsh, but some of them were a bit strong. When you stole a loaf of bread you got seven years in prison. Sometimes the deportation couldn't really be called punishment, because you got land. People would commit crime just to get deported, because it was a new start in a new country with no pollution and with warm weather.

The guard who had the scissors to cut our hair when we went to the cells was realistic. It was very cold down there. It might have been nice to have had some realistic smells as well.

The Galleries of Justice is at the Shire Hall, High Pavement, Lace Market, Nottingham (0115-952 0555). Open: Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays 10am-5pm. Closed 24-26

December. As a result of redevelop-ment the current Condemned! exhibition will close on 20 April for expansion. New police galleries open on 6 April, and crime and punishment

galleries on 20 July. Admission: Until 20 April, adults £4.25, children aged 5-14 £2.95, family ticket for two adults and two children

£11.95. For police galleries (from 6 April), adults £3.95, children £3.50. family ticket £11.95. From 20 July, police galleries and crime and punishment galleries, adults £7.95, children £4.95, family ticket £23.95, Season tickets, special events and group rates available.

Access: mobility-impaired visitors currently have access to only 60 per cent of the exhibition, but this rises to 90 per cent in July. Toilets: clean, Baby-changing and fa-

cilities for disabled. Catering: courtyard cafe and judges' pantry serving snacks, etc, available from 2 March. Shop: gift shop opens 2 March.

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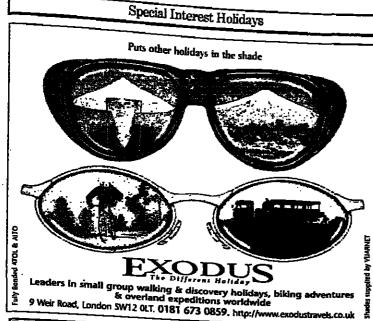
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## Ski hell, ski heaven

Snow, food, hotel - satisfying the demands of the whole family can be tricky. For Louise Levene, it took two tries

You can't please everybody. Or can you? had risen two floors and the ceiling had risen Is it possible to find a skiing holiday that by 6ft. can satisfy a five-year-old, an adult beginner, a lapsed intermediate aged 55 and a keen skier? Last year we got it wrong. This year we finally got it right.

The choice of resort for February 1997 was always going to be complicated by the fact that the 55-year-old (my mother) is something of a luxury model. In her extensive exshape of the Sydney Opera House. Switzerland, spiritual home of the luxury hotel, seemed the obvious place to look for a resort that would offer village-based skiing but still put chocolate truffles on your pillow. If the brochures were any guide, the obvious Fee. How wrong we were.

Our chosen hotel was decorated in a chandeliers. The thing to remember about hotel star systems is that stars are awarded things like room safes and shrink-wrapped lavatory seats. Never mind. It looked swish enough - at ground level anyway.

Upstairs was a different story. We had asked for a quiet room on a high floor. What three groups who opted for this fishy fidid we get? An overheated second-floor shoehox overlooking a noisy night-club. The bobble-hatted rep with the name of his emplayers splashed helpfully across his fleece. reminded us that the small print in the brochure stressed special requests could not youths in Bermuda shorts. be guaranteed. My mother, veteran of a hundred Presidential Suites, wasted no time and few words. "It's a horrible room. You But you can't ski all the time. Eating out know yourself it's horrible. I'm sure you was almost as disappointing as eating in. have something else." Within minutes we We tried lunching in a crowded Konditorei

Time for a stiff drink. This very hotel

(which shall remain nameless: a lot can happen in 12 months) had once been celebrated in a Sunday newspaper for the staff's legendary ability to remember how you like your Martinis from one year to the next. A likely story. In my experience the sweet but strangely ineffectual perience, hotels are those nice places where staff would have trouble remembering that they serve caviare from ice sculptures in the you ordered a Martini at all. The service in the three restaurants was slower than molasses. Wherever you ate, you were guaranteed 30 minutes staring at a greasy plate between courses, while your fiveyear-old curled up as the clock struck 10. Nor was the food always worth the wait. winner was a five-star establishment in Saas Anything in buffet form was delicious, but opt for a dish that needed to be bodily transferred from kitchen to table, and rather queasy mixture of knotty pine and you'd better bring a sleeping-bag. These foodie disappointments climaxed in the weekly Lobster Banquet, an extravagannot for taste or charm, but for piffling little za staged, unaccountably, beside the indoor swimming-pool in an atmosphere optimistically described in the literature as "Karibische", but which was about as Bajan as a stale banana sandwich. The asco were seated so far from culinary HQ that we remained forgotten for 40 minutes at a time while we waited for the next instalment of rubbery crustacean to be delivered to our pool-side sauna by dozy

North-facing slopes and a good fall of snow meant that the skiing was fabulous.



and were reduced to ordering toasted themselves, they had no business putting the few operators who understood that ham and cheese sandwiches and a small pizza. One doesn't expect much from a ham and cheese sandwich - a global commodity that can be found on every snack menu from Rio to Ramsgate - but there are two things one expects from a pizza: it should be bot, and the bottom should be harder than the top. This pizza failed on both counts. No time to mince words: "Fräulein? Please take this away. It isn't very nice.'. The waitress looked at me in frank disbelief and removed the plate, only to return with it 10 minutes later, steam rising from the curdled pool of cheese. "But we don't want

it at all. It isn't very nice," I explained. "Excyoosse me madame," hissed the by now exassssperated woman, "but ziss is not

pizza on the menu if they couldn't defrost it adequately.

We had better meals, but none was exceptional and all were overpriced. It was as if standards fell and prices rose to the levels that would be tolerated by the tourist population, as if the Swiss reputation for good catering had no basis in native pride in the food itself. They do things rather differently in France.

And so, 12 months later, having lost faith in Swiss hotel-keeping, the picky parent agrees to risk a chalet holiday in Meribel. Once again, comfort was the major concern. After wading through page after glossy page of brochures offering rooms that contrive to sleep 12 in a species of bunk shelving that wouldn't disgrace a Tokyo flophouse, I pointed out that whatever they called we established that Simply Ski was one of for a smooth, half-hour transfer by minibus. 303030

queuing for a communal lavatory was not an option. The chalet not only had exem-plary en suite plumbing, it also had a cook who could really cook.

So far so good. What about Méribel itself? Pretty, Identikit pine chalets, sexy clothes shops, Olympic swimming-pool, divine Savoyard food and a free resort bus ensured that a good time was had by all. The skiing wasn't bad either, thanks to good snow and an outfit called Ski Cocktail which had the adult beginner on blue runs within days and rendered the six-year-old a positive hazard.

The other big improvement on last year was the introduction of the Eurostar Ski Train from Waterloo, which takes you to Moutiers in seven-and-a-half hours, ready Simply Ski 0181-742 2541. Eurostar 0345

That may sound like a long time to spend on a train, but by the time you've trekked out to Heathrow and spent two hours in Tie Rack, three hours mopping up spilled Ribena in tourist class and three hours helping a toddler throw up into a paper bag on the coach from Lyons, you really might be better off admiring the mistletoe-garlanded trees of Northern France while tucking into home-made sandwiches and playing cards. The picnic was essential. The Eurostar buffet last week was reduced to a peculiar waffle thickly encrusted with sugar and cinnamon that proved to be a close relative of the polystyrene ceiling tile. It can only be a matter of time before they turn up on the menus of Swiss cafés.

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## The Full Moonty

On Thursday, a stripe of darkness will descend upon Latin America. Our turn next, writes Simon Calder - but Britain's travel industry is in danger of being eclipsed itself

Silence envelops you as completely as the darkness. For the painfully finite seconds of totality, you and your fellow watchers are smothered by a blanket of awe and humility as the heavens show their hand. The meek moon reveals, briefly, its power to suppress a swaggering sun the Channel, then start blacking out a series of which can but flare feebly behind the solid black disc. This is a demonstration of astronomical contempt that will live with you for ever.

All of which was completely lost on the merry band of eclipse watchers in Mongolia last March. I had bade farewell to them at the Eurostar terminal at Waterloo. Bearing battered trunks trussed firmly with fine brass fittings, they were setting out by train to a desolate point outside the world's coolest capital, Ulan Bator. About an hour before the 1997 total solar eclipse, a snowstorm muscled over the horizon and rained on the parade of amateur astronomers lined up to watch the universe at work.

They were, my reports suggest, remarkably sanguine about the maddening meteorological intervention. Perhaps that's because we live in an astonishingly fortunate age when cheap travel makes it possible to witness next Thursday's total eclipse of the sun for a sum equivalent to a fortnight's work at the average British wage. While the British are generally characterised as sun-seekers, a substantial minority of us who like to see the orb of our desires disappear. Since the great Indian event of 1995 (where I lost my eclipse virginity), the holidaying fraternity has been looking forward to another warm weather experience.

You'd be lucky, though, to find a seat on a flight to the favoured site for viewing this year's totality: the Dutch Caribbean island of Curação. The astronomer Dr John Mason said yesterday there was not a cloud within 1,000 miles of the island.

Roughly once a year, a stripe of the earth's surface will be flung into darkness as the moon blots out the sun. And once you're started on eclipse tourism, it's difficult to stop at the sun. Many enthusiasts track down more esoteric lunar eclipses - when the earth blacks out a full moon, with the dramatic results demonstrated (pictured, right) seen in Arizona in 1996.

The trick, though, for solar eclipses is to find a venue that (a) you can reach relatively easily, and (b) will be free of cloud cover. A third consideration is, according to the travel industry's eclipse guru Brian McGee: "Ambience - we find there's a trade-off between maximising the length of totality and enjoying the surroundings."

₹ COLOME

As a satisfied customer of Mr McGee's company, Explorers' Tours, I am inclined to agree. In 1995 I spent the (for me) hitherto unheard-of sum of £1,400 on a fortnight's holiday in India, witnessing the eclipse at the extraordinary abandoned fort of Fatehpur Sikri, between Jaipur and Agra. Totality lasted barely a minute, which for old eclipsians is a seven-stone solar weakling; Thursday's show will last around three minutes. But the magical surroundings of heroically crumbling sandstone made the event a surreal study of humankind, showing not only our innate fragility but also how over-excited we can get about an entirely predictable event.

Predicting the track of an eclipse is a relatively trivial scientific exercise. We know that on Wednesday 11 August next year, at 11.11am, the following minute, it will sweep across west Cornwall just north of Penzance and south of cities: Luxembourg, Stuttgart, Munich and Bucharest will experience totality, whereas Paris, Vienna and Budapest will see more than 99 per cent of the sun disappear.

Within Britain, anyone south of Newcastle will experience a significant darkening of the sky - seen through a Mylar viewer, the sun will look like the slenderest crescent moon. But for the Full Moonty, you have to head for the south-western tip of Britain.

Which is when life gets tricky. Thursday's eclipse will spark huge interest in the biggest astronomical event in Britain for 70 years; a total solar eclipse over our favourite holiday county, Cornwall. HM Nautical Almanac Office, which produces an excellent guide to the event, says it "has the potential of being seen by the largest number of people in the history of eclipse-watching". But the lack of planning in the UK amounts to a Millennium Dome-type muddle. It is still not clear what facilities are available for amateur astronomers, or how they will get there.

The traffic jams on the A30 in Cornwall are dreadful in the middle of any August, let alone one in which everyone is trying to straddle the solid black line of totality. History demonstrates that sanity becomes a precious commodity whenever a total eclipse appears, and anyone who values their mental stability will want to travel by rail. Mr McGee has already chartered a couple of special trains to travel overnight to Penzance. But anyone who wishes to rely on scheduled trains is in for a communications black-out.

A declaration of self-interest. I live in Waterloo, whence the sleeper departs for Penzance - the optimum ambience for eclipse-viewing. My extended family are keen to be there - it'll be the last for 92 years. Get the overnight train down, we reckon. Enjoy an astronomical breakfast at the café opposite the station, then wander along the sands to Marazion to watch the eclipse within the awesome framework afforded by St Michael's Mount. Spend the rest. of the day winding down on the beach, then head back to the station and dream heavenly dreams all the way back to Waterloo.

OCEAN!

We can fill an entire carriage on the sleeper. The current going rate is £85 return, but in view of the inevitable heavy depay, right now, twice as

much to guarantee our place out of the sun. That represents potential earnings to Great Western of about £5,000 for doing nothing trickier than hooking up an extra carriage to the train. The problem is that the

company is unwilling or unable to take the money and run the train. When you phone up and try to book, you are told that no bookings will be taken until April 1999. Perhaps it's the wrong kind of eclipse.

Explorers' Tours: 01753 681999. 'A Guide to the 1999 Total Eclipse of the Sun', by Steve Bell (HMSO, £5.95) comes complete with Mylar viewer. Call 0171-873 9090.



Moon on the move: time exposure shot of the lunar eclipse of September 1996, seen in Phoenix, Arizona

Photograph: Bob Dunn/Mesa Tribune

Our favourite foreign country, France, yesterday staged an open day at the new French Travel Centre in Piccadilly, central London. But while Saturday opening. refurbished premises and the addition of ferry operators is to be welcomed, anyone planning to visit the country in June or July this year could encounter a series of nasty surprises.

You could blame football, because the World Cup finals will take place around France from 10 June to 12 July. But even with the addition of a million soccer fans there should be room for everyone; France is the biggest tourist destination in the world, with 60 million visitors a year, and



SIMON CALDER

the tournament carefully avoids peak holiday season in Europe. From previous experience, such as Italy in 1990, many people who would otherwise visit the country

will be deterred by the prospect of football frenzy. But those of us who go to France face higher prices and discrimination against singlesex groups.

The best way to travel around western Europe's largest country, for both soccer fans or non-footballing Francophiles, is by train. The excellent Euro Domino ticket allows 10 days of unlimited rail travel for £200. In June and July, though, the price increases by £20; it falls again on 1 August.

profiteering, many travellers will instead take advantage of low cross-Channel fares, and pack four or five people into a car for a jaunt to and around France. But if you're hoping to keep down costs by staying at some of the country's excellent campsites, make sure you take at least one member of the opposite gender along.

Deterred by such

"ABTOF takes action on World Cup hooligans", reads a headline in the industry journal Travel Weekly. The story reveals how members of the Association of British

Tour Operators to France plan to prevent trouble: by banning single-sex group bookings during the event. So anyone who happens to prefer to holiday with people of the same gender will have problems finding somewhere

cheap and cheerful to stay. The tour operators' real worry is that bunches of drunken lads will cause problems, but equal opportunity legislation means that women-only groups have to be banned too.

Determined "World Cup hooligans" will find it easy to circumvent the rule, just by taking along a token woman supporter (there are some pretty terrifying ones to be found on the terraces of my team. Crawley Town). But groups of nuns (or monks) visiting France will be barred from campsites, as will gay or lesbian holidaymakers.

How can you find out more about such arbitrary rules and price rises? By contacting the new French Travel Centre. Since the vast majority of British travellers to France do not live within easy reach of

central London, most will have to rely on the phone.

France, you may recall, began the fashion for premium-rate numbers when it replaced its normal London line by 0891 244123, costing 49 pence a minute. Many other tourist offices have followed suit; Australia is the latest to introduce premiumrate lines, though until July you can still call the Tourist Commission on the nonpremium 0990 561434.

The strangest policy of all is operated by Holland. The Netherlands Board of Tourism runs a helpful and efficient service using a London number, but says it is not for publication.

The board insists you can find out the number only by first dialling the premiumrate recorded information line 0891 717777. It cost me 23. Living in London, I would have visited in person except that the office is open to visitors only from 1pm-3pm, Monday to Friday.

The new French Travel Centre is at 178 Piccadilly, London WIV QAL.





## Old habits die hard

Pilchards for dinner, en suite cells with sex-defying single iron beds, lights out at 9.30 - and no whispering. Born-again atheist Michael Delahaye mortifies the flesh at the monastery of La Verna in Tuscany

Some years ago a magazine ran a competition for the most unlikely newspaper headline. The winner, as I recall, was "POPE ELOPES". It was with a similar sense of the incongruous that, just after Christmas, I asked my wife to book us a proof. double room in a Franciscan

The Sanctuary of La Verna is between Florence and Urbino. Its claim to fame is that for a decade, between 1214 and 1224, St Francis was a regular visitor. But what makes this the second most important Franciscan site in the world, after Assisi, is that it was here the saint received the stigmata - the holes in his hands and feet in imi-

tation of Christ's crucifizion. Nearly 800 years later. La Verna is still a "working" monastery, with two dozen resident monks and a couple of nuns. And, in the age-old tradition of offering hospitality to weary pilgrims, it takes in paying

For anyone who has ever wondered why holy places are so often high places, La Verna provides the a fish was once the secret sign of answer - closer to Heaven and about as hard to reach. More than 4,000ft above sea level, the monastery is built on - and into an extraordinary outcrop of rock. During the winter months it's literally lost in the clouds. As you approach through a forest dripping with moisture, up a series of increasingly tight switch-backs, it's hard not to feel like the unsuspecting Jonathan Harker in one of those early Dracula movies.

Priscilla was on reception, swathed in black anorak and white scarf. She referred to the bookings list ... "Ah, numero ventisei".

Room 26 turned out to be an "en suite cell", 10ft by 10, with a pair of single beds; shower and lavatory. It was clean and adequate, although during the night my wife was to develop a peculiar devotion to cast-iron radiator. On the back against whispering and giggling

after 10pm. For a number of reasons, this is not a place for honeymoon couples. All beds are narrow and chastely

pankum. Indeed, only in recent years have married couples been allowed to share rooms, although in our case Sister Priscilla had the delicacy not to demand documentary

For anyone more familiar with hotels, the biggest problem is protocol. Should you say grace before eating? (Optional) Do you tip a nun? (No) Or do you discreetly drop a couple of coins into the offertory box? (That'll do nicely. God bless.)

Nor should you expect too much in the culinary department. The Franciscans, it soon becomes clear, are not a gastronomic order. Turning over our place-cards at dinner, we were heartened to see "vitello ai ferri" and "anitra arrosto" on the menu. This, we told ourselves, would be a meal to

At this point something like a miracle occurred as the grilled veal and roast duck were transformed into a hard boiled egg, a slice of cheese and half a pilchard. OK, so Christianity - but, Madonna, a

When we pointed to the back of the place-card, our server shook his head: "That's the summer menu. This is winter." A diner at the next table murmured "Buon appetito", thoughtfully adding, "Good hunger."

Dinner over, we were about to settle in with a compensatory glass of the monastery's excellent Lamponi - a diabolically tempting 33 per The night we arrived, Sister cent proof raspberry liqueur - when we were sent to bed. Lights out, doors locked, heating off. Buona Notte. It was 9.30pm.

None of this is to diminish the extraordinary power of the place. You might even argue it helps concentrate the mind. La Verna is Gethsemane without the coaches; Lourdes minus the plaster knickknackery.

As a born-again atheist, I'm of the door was an injunction hardly qualified to judge but I've no doubt that anyone seeking the which my clearest memory is buy- 5341) Full board: 62,000 lire per ing our daughter a plastic globe of person (approx £22)

single. Hic hankum nullum St Francis in a snow storm). It's a chastening experience to open the door on one of the sanctuary's many chapels, guidebook in hand, camera cocked, to discover a cowled monk kneeling, still as a statue, in silent prayer.

The morning of our second day, I woke to the sound of bells. Leaving my wife still incanting a fitful "Shiver me cloisters". I skipped the 7am service and set off in the mist for La Penna, the mountain peak where St Francis and his brethren used to meditate and pray.

Visibility was down to 20 yards. As I climbed through the forest of pine and beech, the only sound was the occasional crack of gunfire from hunters in the valley below. St Francis would certainly not have approved.

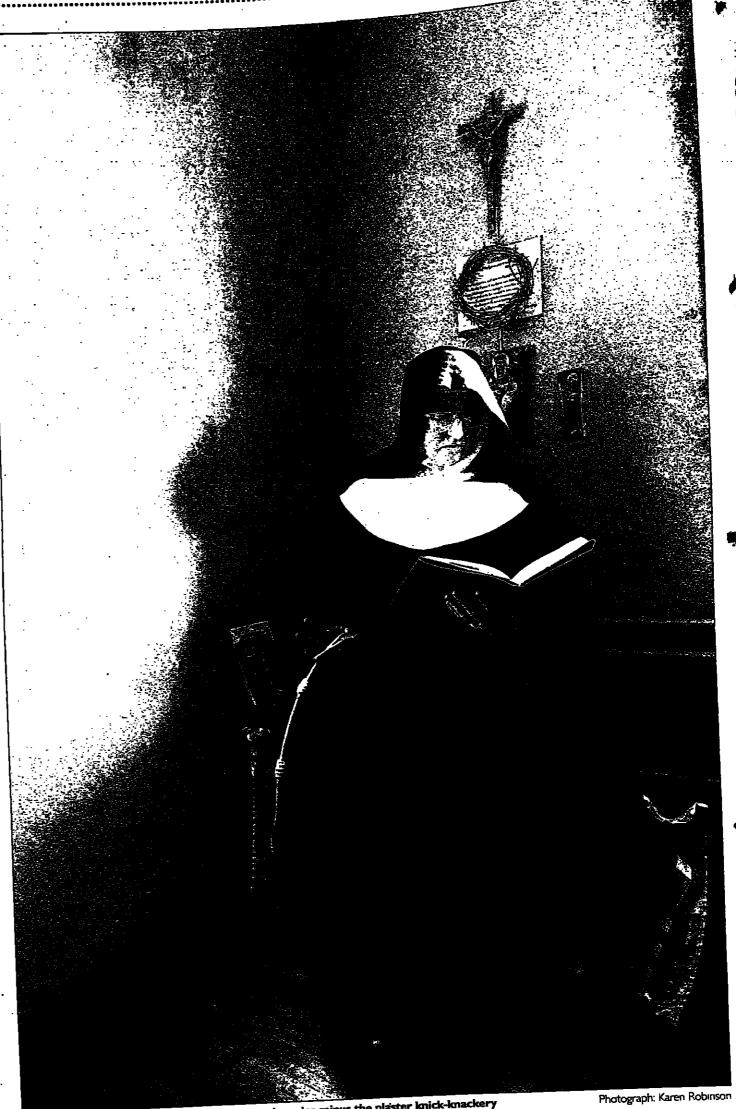
This is not a walk for unsupervised children. At the very top there is a cross and, one pace beyond, a vertiginous drop of several hundred feet - an invitation, if ever there was one, to step into eternity. Walking back by a different route, you come upon a succession of tiny stone chapels. The most charming is that of the Blessed John - a Franciscan brother who, cen-

turies before tree-hugging became fashionable, spent his days praying in front of a giant beech. When the tree died, the chapel with its lowwalled courtyard was built in its

Back in the monastery, there are more than a dozen della Robbia glazed reliefs. The best is in the esilica – a stunning Annunciation by Andrea della Robbia. In the Chapel of the Blessed Stigmata, before a Crucifixion by Andrea, you can see the stone on which St Francis received his wounds.

You don't have to be religious to appreciate La Verna, but it probably helps. If, as a bonus, you fancy a foretaste of Purgatory, make the trip in winter. On the other hand, it's telling that St Francis himself seems to have come here only during the summer months.

"spirit of St Francis" is more like- Santuario della Verna, 52010 Chiusi ly to find it here than at Assisi (of della Verna, la Toscana (00 39 575



La Verna is Gethsemane without the coaches; Lourdes minus the plaster knick-knackery

## The great escape to a no-frills parador

All she wanted was a good night's sleep, but Laurel Berger ended up joining the nuns in singing the night office

I'd been in Madrid just a week when the longing began. I'd been staying in a borrowed flat overlooking a square that was the hub of a rowdy neighbourhood fiesta. At night, unable to sleep, I'd drift into a twilight state in which vast open spaces, lovely hills, empty villages took shape in my mind's eye. It was then I decided to get myself to a nunnery.

Traditionally, Spain's monastic communities have offered hospitality to pilgrims and spiritual seekers; but in recent years many have opened guesthouses for travellers as well. For less than £15 a night you can sleep and eat in a religious monument while experiencing the stillness of contemplative life, so I was told.

I telephoned the Benedictine abbey of San Salvador in the village of Palacios de Benaver. It was located, the guest mistress said, 20km north of Burgos, 2km off the pilgrims' route to Santiago. No mountains, just grain fields. It didn't

sound promising. I imagined a dilapidated convent in the middle of some backwater ringed by scorched fields; a cell with a pallet bed and a cold-water shower down the hall; coarse meals of bean stews and sausage. In short, the kind of place my lefty Spanish friends wouldn't go to for love or money. But on the list that the Castilla-León tourist board had supplied, it was the only one on my list that had any vacancies. So I went anyway.

The city of Burgos is a three-hour bus ride from Madrid. The taxi I took from there rattled along a country road through the heart of old Castile, a flat, stony, bone-dry land, known for its Romanesque ruins, fabulous churches and arch-conservative cilizenty.

When we entered the deserted village - a warren of cut stone edifices which looked as though one strong gust of wind would reduce then to dust - the driver stopped to ask directions to the abbey. The woman he addressed bells. When I awoke it was time for lunch. looked at us as it she hadn't spoken in the longest time and waved vaguely to the north.

"Are you the girl who called last night? asked Concepcion, the guest mistress and superior, just beyond the massive oak portal. The ubbey, which dates from the 12th century, stood on the fringes of the pueblo. Enclosed by a 10ft high wall of unmortared stone, it was sunk into a promontory overlooking lime-capped slopes; attached to it was a small Gothic church with an octagonal apse whose sections jutted out like petals on a flower.

yard of cypress trees and espaliered roses, to the 22-room guesthouse, a converted elementary school, adjoining the cloister. "We had to shut it down four years ago," she said ruefully, "when there were no children left to teach". My fiercely white room, sparely decorated with heavy Castilian furniture and a crucifix, gave on to the gardens. There was a modern en suite bathroom. "Lunch is at 2pm," Sor Concepción said,

I followed the superior through the courtwas a student preparing for exams; a jokey Catalan salesman; a few couples touring the region. And me, I was just chasing a good night's sleep.

Vespers. I dragged my new friends on a nature walk. We followed a dirt track into the hills and observed the poplar trees in the dying light. Middle-aged men, all of them, they groused the whole way. Joaquin kept stepping in the brambles; José feared it would rain; Arman, the sales-



handing over the room key. "Please be on time." I folded back the bedspread, slipped off my espadrilles and lay on top of the rough sheets. They smelled of bleach and fresh air. Outside, the noon sun was beating down on the stones but the build-

heard birdsong, the sound of a tractor, angelus The men and women seated at the long dining table were like holiday-making Spaniards everywhere: loud, garrulous, a bit cheeky. The nuns served morcilla, a locally made blood sausage, and roast pork; the Rioja poured freely.

ing's thick masonry walls kept the heat out. I

I met a consumptive-looking young writer who confessed that when he first got here he expected to find himself surrounded by religiosos and suicide candidates. But aside from a couple of genuinely devout Catholics, most of the other guests were searching for nothing more transcendent than a place of repose. They saw

man, was ruining his good shoes. But what is more, he announced in solemn tones, the hora del aperitivo was now upon us. He'd been there all week, he said, and he was sick of the nuns' cooking. There was a bar in the next town that was supposed to do very nice tapas.

And so we abandoned our expedition and made our way north in Arman's Nissan to a forlorn little pueblo called Villasandino, where half the locals seemed to be packed into the town's one grotty little bar, which had no tapas whatsoever. We ordered pints and shared a bag of crisps. As children, they told me, their dread of the church was greater than their dread of Franco. "The priesthood ruled this country for 50 years," said Arman, lighting a Marlboro. "And it was 'shut up or put up' for the rest of us."

When we got back to Palacios, dinner was already on the table. I picked at my food but polished off dessert, queso de Burgos - a fresh,

bland-tasting white cheese drizzled with honey from the convent's apiary. Although I'd read that it wasn't good form to address the nuns, these sisters, some of whom hadn't left the enclosure in decades, were positively loquacious.

Later, I chatted to one of the oldest nuns, who spoke of the convent's close association with the great Benedictine abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos, whose monks cut a record of Gregorian chant a few years ago that went platinum. We chant Gregorian here too, she said, giving no hint of what she was up to. Perhaps I would

like to see the choir? I followed this tiny figure in sweeping black robes through the unlit cloister, a marble floored gallery with arched windows built around a courtyard, and stepped into the choir. An iron grille screened it off from the sanctuary, which was dominated by an extravagant Baroque centrepiece depicting Jesus surrounded by the saints of the order. According to legend, in the year 836, the 300 nuns who then lived here lopped off their noses to protect their chastity from invading Moors. The soldiers arrived the next day, chopped off the women's heads and burned down the abbey. All 300 were made virgin-martyrs but the convent remained in ruins until the 12th century, when a nobleman by the name of Count Fernández Manrigue paid to

have it rebuilt. And then the nun, interrupting my reverie, handed me an open psalter bearing the legend of Santo Domingo de Silos. At that moment I realised I'd been invited to join them in singing the night office. Now this was an impossibility, considering that I'm practically tone deaf and my knowledge of Latin is patchy; worst of all, I'm not even a Christian. At one point it occurred to me that I should get the hell out of there. But by that time the organist had arrived. The other choristers soon followed, women as small and gnarled as the scrub oak that dotted the hillside. And then the office began. In Latin we chanted:

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell

That night I slept very well indeed.

The monastery of San Salvador (00 34 947 45 0209), in the village of Palacios de Benaver, is a three-hour drive from Madrid. Single rooms cost 3,500 pesetas a night, doubles 5,000, all meals included. Castilla-León tourist board: 00 34 902 203030.

#### RED CHANNEL

Foreign Office advice for travel in Kenya

"The Samburu, Shaba and Masai Mara game reserves have experienced incidents of banditry. A British visitor was killed in a private game sanctuary at a country club outside Nairobi. Tourists wishing to visit these reserves should be accompanied by guards or tour operators.

A general election took place in Kenya on 29 and 30 December 1997. Political meetings and demonstrations, which can be violent, are likely to continue and should be avoided.

Politically motivated ethnic clashes have occurred in Laikipia and Nakuru districts. A night curfew has been imposed in these districts, including Nakuru town, from 9pm to 6am. Visitors should exercise extreme caution in these areas.

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Except as otherwise indicated, game reserves and other tourist areas are generally safe, but muggings and armed attacks can occur anywhere and at any time, particularly in Nairobi and Mombasa. Be alert at all times. Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Avoid travelling after dark and in isolated places, particularly empty beaches. Do not carry valuables or wear jewellery in public places.

Avoid the North Eastern Province, the Tana River district of Coast Province and the Isiolo and Marsabit districts of Eastern Province where cattle raids are fre-

Foreign Office travel advice is available on BBC2 (Ceufax) p 470 and can be accessed on http://www.fco.gov.uk/, or call 0171-238 4503.

#### HIGH ROAD FROM HEATHROW

You want to spend £640 on a day's outing? Sign up for the 100-minute "flight to nowhere" on Concorde, operated by Goodwood Travel (01227 763336). It departs on 22 March or 5 April. You get a three-course champagne meal and a trip to the cockpit.

#### LOW ROAD FROM HEATHROW

Or, if you are in generous mood, take four friends to Rome for the day - and still have £15 change. Aeroscope (01608 650103) is offering day trips to Rome on Alitalia for £125 per person, including a free travel card for the Italian capital. Departing at 7.20am, you get nine hours in Rome. The offer runs until the end of March.

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## roam With a view

Next week the Government is expected to publish its long awaited consultation paper on extending countryside access. David Foster talks to those with a stake in the debate, and charts the failure of previous attempts to enlarge the 'right to roam'

Nip into any decent bookshop and for National Parks, the Act "had only a mararound £5 you can pick up an Ordnance Survey map. It is your key to local footpaths, part of a national network extending for more than 100,000 miles.

The same maps also show National Parks. But 50 years ago, things were very different: National Parks were still in the future, and although OS maps did mark some footpaths, their legal status was

In 1949 came the National Parks and Access of the Countryside Act. As well as enabling the creation of National Parks, the Act required local authorities in England and Wales to produce "definitive maps" of local rights of way open to everyone.

However, the Act was expected to do more. Councils also had to consider making agreements with landowners that would open up vast areas of countryside for Meacher, told a Ramblers' Association people to roam at will. In the absence of meeting that "the right to roam is a cenagreement, a council could make an access tral part of our environmental proorder - if they paid compensation to the gramme... I anticipate that we will be access. There is very little additional access landowner. But access maps only had to be preparing a bill... for the [parliamentary] being generated. But in any case, voluntary and that will involve some costs. Walkers prepared if access areas were actually established and, somehow, this didn't happen.

ginal effect" and the open country provisions "never became a vital part of [the] culture of recreation provision".

The problem, says Anthony Bosanquet, deputy president of the Country Landowners' Association (CLA), is that "local authorities have been reluctant to use their powers because of a lack of finance".

Stephen Jenkinson, of the Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers (IPROW) agrees: "In the Peak District they've opened up 80 square miles of extra access," he says. "That's only a tenth of the area of the Snowdonia National Park, but the annual cost of compensation is £250,000."

So much for history. Labour's manifesto promised "greater freedom for people to explore our open countryside", and last autumn the environment minister, Michael session which begins in October 1998."

Landowners also want to see more Only five out of 107 local authorities access, though they believe that legislation recently surveyed by the Ramblers' Asso- is unnecessary. In November 1996, the ciation actually have such maps. In short, CLA's Access 2000 conference established

and diversity of access" by voluntary rather than statutory methods.

A walk on the wild side ... but post-war attempts to open up vast tracts of land to ramblers have become bogged down

Since then the CLA has appointed an access adviser, and is producing an access register listing all non-statutory access provided by their members. Among other benefits, says Mr Bosanquet, this should address the long-standing issue of access that has been granted in return for tax exemptions. "There is no question at all that when a bargain has been struck with the taxpayer, then the public must be aware of where that access is." His only reservation is that an individual's tax affairs must remain confidential.

Mr Jenkinson welcomes the new access register. "My only worry is that without access to Inland Revenue records, they're relying on voluntary disclosure by landowners." But Kate Ashbrook, chair of the Ramblers' Association, is sceptical. "What the CLA has published so far isn't new much of it is long-established, customary known where it is."

the survey concludes that outside the a policy to "increase the quality, quantity are sharp differences of opinion about the ple who abuse it."

practicalities - and the costs. Mr Bosanquet believes that a statutory right to roam "would undoubtedly involve compensation for loss of ownership rights" and he questions whether it would be either better or cheaper "than updating the 1949 Act to deal with people who won't fail into line"

with a voluntary approach. Ms Ashbrook disagrees. "We don't think open access needs the same sort of funding as footpaths. We don't expect that councils would need to produces maps. In most cases there will be no dispute about whether the land falls within the new definition". Most moorland, she argues, is pretty clear cut; and while there are problems defining downland, the Ramblers are helping with ideas to make things clearer.

The future depends on the results of the Government's consultation exercise, but any new legislation will probably be administered by members of IPROW.

"Giving people quality information about access if vital," says Mr Jenkinson access would just be a hotch-potch; it won't also need alerting to the seasonal and envibe shown on OS maps, and the public won't ronmental restrictions that everyone agrees will be necessary. "The problem isn't man-If there is wide agreement about the aging the people who use the access," he need to open up more countryside, there says. "The problem is managing the peo-

### NATURE NOTE

Carrion crows are already starting to stake out their breeding sites. Especiall in the early mornings, they proclaim individual territories with long, harsh calls of "kaaark, kaaark", repeated agair and again. Any time now they will start to build their nests, which are big, clumsy constructions of sticks, thickly lined with hair or wool, and often placed on top of old nests or squirrels dreys. Voracious predators, equipped with powerful beaks, crows are mo. destructive in spring, when they '\_it besides carrion – the eggs and chicks of other birds. A famous photograph taken by a Game Conservancy researcher on Salisbury Plain shows the shells of more than 50 pheasant and partridge eggs scattered under one crow's nest. They also crack open hardshelled titbits such as crabs and walnuts by dropping them from a height, and even gouge out the eyes of ewes which have gone down while lambing and are still alive but too weak to stand. Crows

can be distinguished from rooks by the



Photograph: Christopher Jones

fact that they tend to be solitary, and are totally black; rooks live and nest in large flocks, and have a white patch around the base of the beak. Also, crows are slightly larger, with slower, heavier wing-beats.

**Duff Hart-Davis** 

### Acts of God and other risks

In the belfry of his church, Duff Hart-Davis ponders the worst case scenario I fear that we are inclined to take the fabric of our village church for granted. There the stone building stands on the hillside, apparently as solid as the rock on which it is founded, and apparently as un-

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changing. Yet nothing brings its potential frailties more sharply into focus than a visit from a representative of the ecclesiastical insurance com-

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church-warden met him for a routine inspection, I decided to make a job of it and look into the bell loft, which is rarely visited because the only access is through a small door set into the wall of the tower 20ft above the ground. I therefore took along an extending aluminium ladder,

and walked down the lane with it balanced fore and aft on my shoulders, head through the rungs. This drew looks of astonishment from several passing hikers, who clearly thought that a lunatic had been set at large from some nearby institution with a special neck-brace to keep him out of mischief.

Our insurance man was waiting for us, a lively and articulate fellow, smartly turned out in a suit and a dark blue overcoat. Almost his first words were: "As you probably know, 65 per cent of all church fires are started by arsonists."

"Really?" I said. Yes. And 25 per cent by lightning strikes." Warming to his theme, he rattled cheerfully on: "If someone set fire to this church, he wouldn't start just one blaze. He'd start several. One here under the tower, one at the altar end. maybe one under the organ. The result usually is that the building is engulfed in flames before the fire brigade can

reach the scene. "You've got a good deal of wood in here, haven't you? All these pews, the screen. the roof timbers, the floors in the tower ... Stained glass. too, I see. Of course, flames tend to go out through win-

dows and up through the roof. So you'd lose the roof and all the windows."

At first I thought he was pitching things rather high. Then I saw that he was only being realistic, and looking at the worst possible scenario. As he measured and not-

ed, I kept thinking of the lightning bolt that streaked down during a thunderstorm two summers ago and missed the church by the length of a cricket pitch. The strike. which I happened to witness from across the valley, exploded a giant cedar growing in the graveyard, and flung 100lb chunks of wood several hundred yards uphill.

The discharge of energy was so phenomenal that I doubt whether the church, for all its copper conductors, could have withstood it. Even without a direct hit, we had to pay £1,200 to have the shattered tree removed and £500 to rebuild a stone wall smashed by the falling trunk, so we were glad we could make an insurance claim.

"Slip and trip," the inspector was saying. "That's another thing you've got to look out for." He explained that because people are increasingly litigious these days, and tend to sue for damages at the slightest setback to their persons or property, it is advisable to have no loose carpets, hidden steps or other hazards over which visitors

may stumble. We scored fairly high on that front; less well on the fireextinguishers, which were past their test-by date. One big point in our favour was that

we had renewed the entire electrical system only two years earlier. When we came to the vestry, we were able to demonstrate our contention that the church contains nothing of value.

One key question was, "Do you keep the building locked?" The answer was, "In winter, yes, but not in summer." I feared that this policy might bring criticism, but no our inspector found it reasonable that tourists should have access to the building.

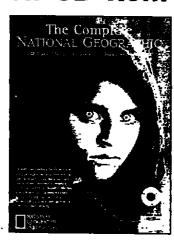
When it came to the tower I was the only person who went up the ladder. I was glad to report that the first little room was dry and sound. A rusty iron ladder led up to the chamber housing the single bell, and although it is seldom rung these days, the bearings at either end of the spindle were well greased. By giving the drive-wheel a sudden turn, I sent one baritone chime booming out over the valley.

Up another level, and out through a pop-hole, I gained access to the roof inside the battlements. From there I could look out on level terms at two large pines, which I knew that inspector had marked down as a potential threat because, if they blow over in a westerly gale, they may crash into the tower.

Clanking home with my ladder, I felt sure he would raise our premium, which is already more than £500 a year, and a considerable burden for a parish with fewer than 20 households. But I see that we need to pay it - and after all those revelations, I am glad that we do.

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## Horticultural horoscope

Each sign of the zodiac has its associated plants. Naila Green lays down the lore on staying in synch with the heavens

is about to begin. The spring equinox is plants are rose, poppy, violet, foxglove, almost upon us and, as the days lengthen. vine, ash, cypress and apple. The climbing dening year ahead and making planting and can be smothered with tiny pink flow-plans are closely linked. While modern ers at the same time as ceanothus Puget horoscopes may not offer much help, in old astrology books horticulture was prominent. and each star sign had its associated plants. plete the picture.

Pisces (20 February to 20 March): Water Gemini (22 May to 21 June): Lily of the lily, fig and willow are Pisces plants. Willows valley, lavender, and nut trees are Gemini's lily, fig and willow are Pisces plants. Willows are choice in winter, with the glowing orange-scarlet stems of Salix alba 'Britzensis'. In early spring, Salix helvetica has soft grey leaves, and silky grey and yellow catkins.

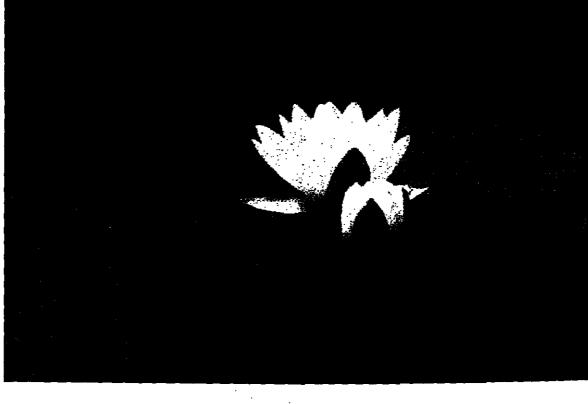
Aries (21 March to 20 April): Geranium, thistle, honeysuckle and witch hazel, all linked to Aries, tend not to flower this mouth, though on mild days the lilac-blue flowers of Geranium malviflorum and the maroonblack of G phaeum can appear. Thorns are also linked to Aries, the common hawthorn lavallei is one of the best; it has spring blossom, and orange berries in winter.

For Sales

Forget 1 January. For gardeners, the year Taurus (21 April to 21 May): Taurus the adrenaline flows. Foretelling the gar-rose 'Pompon de Paris' is especially early, Blue'. Clumps of the smoky-purple violet. Viola labradorica 'Purpurea', would com-

plants. The sweet, lily-of-the-valley scent of Convallaria majalis 'Fortin's Giant' fills the garden at this time. The French laven-include sunflower, marigold, dahlia, roseder, Lavandula stocchas, also flowers now, topped by rose-purple bracts.

Cancer (22 June to 22 July): Acanthus is a Cancer plant, the most imposing variety being Acanthus spinosus with its mauvepurple flower spikes and huge, dissected and arching leaves. It thrives on poor soil, symbolising the onset of spring. Crataegus x plenty of sun, and good drainage. Also associated with this sign are wild flowers,



Leo (23 July to 23 August): Leo plants mary, orange, bay, and palm. Trachycarpus with tiny heads of fragrant purple flowers forume, the chusan palm, is a striking, hardy topped by rose-purple bracts. forume, the chusan palm, is a striking, hardy palm with large, divided, fan-like leaves and sprays of fragrant, creamy-yellow flowers. summer sees the start of their flowering. One of the most popular and fashionable is Bishop of Llandaff, with bronze-green

Virgo (24 August to 23 September):

leaves and single, deep red flowers.

with small, brightly-coloured flowers. An edible, decorative nut tree is the purpleleaved filbert, Corylus maxima 'Purpurea'. Purplish catkins with yellow anthers hang from bare branches in late winter.

Dahlias are good plants for Leo, as late Libra (24 September to 23 October): Blue flowers are linked with the sign of Libra, as are opulent roses, and vines. One of the more striking vines for the garden is Vitis coignetiae, which has large, heart-shaped leaves turning shades of crimson and scarlet in the autumn. Blue flowers are uncommon at this

positions the hardy plumbago, Ceracostigma willmottianum, will bloom with its vibrant blue flowers from August until the first severe frosts come to wither its crimson leaves.

Scorpio (24 October to 22 November): Scorpio includes all plants with dark red flowers, blackthorn, and nut trees. Dark red flowers are uncommon this month, though leaves in that shade are plentiful. Euonymus alatus has an abundance of red leaves followed by small purple and red fruit. Sedum maximum 'Atropurpureum' has succulent, Virgo's plants are nut trees, and shrubs time of year, though in sheltered, south-facing dark maroon foliage and red flower heads.

Sagittarius (23 November to 21 December): Plants for this star sign are pinks, lime, mulberry, ash, oak, and birch. The birch tree is welcome for its silvery bark. Even better than the common silver birch is the whitewashed Benula jacquemontii. which shimmers in the frosty, pale winter sunlight. Plant it at the end of the garden,

as a focal point and because it will, in time,

reach 15 metres (50ft) in height.

Pisces plant: Nymphaea Alba

Photograph: john Gloven Garden Picture Library

Capricom (22 December to 2) January): Ivy is associated with Capricorn and, although common. Hedera helix 'Goldheart' can look stunning with Comus alba 'Sibirica', its bright red stems shining out like laser beams. Other Capricorn plants include pansy, hemlock, pine, willow, elm and poplar.

Aquarius (22 January to 19 February): Fruit and nut trees are associated with Aquarius, but can look dull. Not so the winter-flowering cherry, Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'. Although it is unable to fruit, its frosty white flowers shine like stars during mild winters. The contorted hazel, Corylus avellana 'Contorta', also unproductive, has twisted, bare stems with yellow catkins dangling like baubles on a

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That the T

Clematis Viticella 'Abundance'

Photograph: Howard Rice/

Garden Picture Library

Last week Brian Glover of London wrote in support of the rose 'Agnes' which he thought I was treating unfairly. Karen Williams, of Great Bentley, Essex, feels the same way. "My 'Agnes' rose is about eight years old and is a great favourite," she writes. "It is too near a deodar cedar and probably endures a poor soil, which I have done very little to improve. It also spends much of each day in shade. It seems to like these difficult conditions, although I admit it is not a very good-looking plant.

"But each year it has at least 20 beautiful flowers, and I like to cut them for the house, because the perfume is wonderful, a kind of spicy lemon, unlike the perfume of any other rose I have grown."

I began to feel I should not have dispatched my 'Agnes' to the bonfire, despite having waited 15 years in vain for a flower. I went to the place where it had been in the garden, to say sorry to its ghost. There, sprouting with massive insouciance, were four fat new suckers of the recalcitrant rose. It made me laugh. I feel that, like the Tamworth pigs, the rose has earned a reprieve. But whether the shock will now make it flower remains to be seen.

Do you make sourdough bread? Are you as interested in your vinegar as you are in your olive oil? If yes, then you should get hold of the catalogue produced by Future Foods, which offers an extraordinary range of out-ofthe-way things to grow. Sourdough "Tunnel Hill" comes highly recommended from California. It's a culture that makes bread rise, like yeast, but it works more slowly and breaks down carbohydrates in the flour to make bread more digestible. A starter kit costs £7.50.

Future Foods can also supply the fermenting culture that turns soya bean or barley into Japanese miso. Japanese cooks make a wide range of misos by mixing spores of the fungus Aspergillus oryzue with cooked soya beans or grains of various kinds. This koji then continues with a secondary fermentation which turns it into miso, shoyu or tamari. Kits

The catalogue also includes a wide range of unusual vegetables and fruit: Chinese greens, serpent garlic, yams (must be kept frost free), saffron crocus, huckleberries, wineberries and other treats. For a copy, send £1 to Future Foods, PO Box 1564, Wedmore, Somerset

The English Gardening School will be running a one-day course on "down-to-earth gardening" on Monday 2 March (10.30am-3.30pm). Dr Lesley Rosser gives the lowdown on soil management, choice of plants, weed control and other practical matters. The

day costs £70.50. For further information on this and other courses, contact the English Gardening School at the Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3

Anna Pavord

Shoots to kill

Cutting new growth may seem drastic, writes Anna Pavord, but you've got to be cruel to be kind

If anybody mentions global warming to me again, I'll scream. After a stretch of the wettest and most unpleasant winter months I can remember for a long time - mud to the borizon - I think we deserved a couple of fine, warm days to remind ourselves why we ever thought we liked gardening. Valentine's weekend was a miracle. I don't care if we have to pay for it with late frosts in May, as the doom merchants predict. Last Saturday, I stood among the aconites spreadeagled in the sun, and sniffed like a truffle hound the smell of the viburnum on the other side of the path, "Yes!" I thought "Here we go again."

It was such an extraordinary sensation, feeling the sun warm on my back, I could easily have frittered the whole day away. I lifted up snowdrops to look at the odd green punctuation marks on the inner petals. I admired the slaty, dark satin colours of the hellebores. I resolved, once again, to divide the blue primroses. But, although I tried hard to maintain the tunnel vision that is so essential in a gardener, it was horribly obvious that there was a vast backlog of work.

Much of it had to do with pruning. February is the time to tackle the later-flowering clematis and cut them down to within 18in of the ground. They won't die if you don't, but if you leave them to their own devices, they tend to flower in a bundle high up on the wall or support, leaving vou to look into a bird's-nest tangle of bare stems.

If you have planted a late-flowering clematis such as C viticella to run through an earlierflowering shrub, or to accompany a rose, the growth may become so vigorous that the host shrub is suffocated. By clearing out the carapace of clematis each season, you give the supporting shrub breathing-space. It can go ahead with its own performance untrammelled, before the clinging clematis smothers it up.

If you have planted clematis to accompany a rose on a pergola, or against a wall, the rose itself will probably need pruning now. which, again, means you have to do something about the clematis. I certainly needed to do some work on the 'Constance Spry' rose planted on the south front of the house, which was tangled up with a vigorous Clematis 'Jackmanii Superba'.

'Constance Spry' is usually described as a shrub rose, but it will easily get to 20ft if it has support. It was bred by David Austin in 1961, so in rose terms it is a new arrival, but it looks old, with big, cabbagey double flowers of a not-too-sickly pink. Austin calls it "myrrh-scented". I'd always wondered what myrrh smelt like.

The rose was doing wonders for any acrobat who happened to be hanging out of our attic window, but not much for anyone else. Fortunately buds that were already springing up. Once the hesitate to take the knife to it immediately it had away as a strong new shoot.

clematis was out of the way, I could see more clearly what to do with the rose. Some of the longest growths had to be cut back to about 4ft.

13/GARDENING

Other stems I pulled down, arching them against the wall as near to horizontal as they would go. This brought the bulk of the rose down towards eye level. It will also persuade the stems to flower more freely than if they were vertical. Some roses are too stiff to treat like this, but 'Constance Spry' has relatively unthorny, pliable stems.

If C macropetala or C alpina had been rambling through the 'Constance Spry' rose, the whole job would have been much trickier. Both of those clematis flower quite early, during April and May. They are already bursting with growth, and do not need regular pruning. It would have been difficult to retrain the rose without cutting back the clematis, but if it had been one of the early ones, we would have lost this season's flowering. You need to bear this in mind when you pair clematis with other climbers.

Clematis can be divided into three groups early, mid- and late-season - which dictate whether or not they should be pruned. Earlyflowering ones need no pruning, mid-season ones can be lightly pruned, late-flowering ones need

cutting back hard, to within 18in of the ground. But rules are made to be broken. If an early-

finished flowering. Conversely, if 1 followed the rules then I would prune our yellow. Septemberflowering Clematis orientalis every year, but I don't. It does a good job of softening a bare stone wall, and does not get in the way of any other plants. So it's often left for five or six years before it is brought to heel. And rejuvenated.

مكذا من ألاصل

That is another good reason for pruning. Young growths often flower better and with bigger flowers than old ones, which is why buddleia is usually pruned every year about now. No great thunderbolt will fall if you forget to tackle it, but the shrub, a coarse grower at the best of times, will get bigger than it deserves, and the long panicles of bloom will not be as showy as they should be.

Buddleia is difficult to kill, which is comforting to know when you are a new gardener cruising round it wondering where to plunge in the knife. If it is an established bush, it will already have four or five main stems, all of which need to be cut hard back. There will usually be a bright, preruary pruning. I cut all its stems down first, although flowering Clematis montana has got rampantly out cocious bud, already breaking into leaf, to give I fell like a murderer chucking away all the plump of hand, as they sometimes do, then I would not you a lead. Cut above this, trusting it to zoom

TURTLE DIRT TRAPPER MATS

kick-starting plants into new growth and the general rule is to do it immediately a shrub has finished flowering. The ones that need attention now, though, are mostly those that flower in late summer. You don't prune them in autumn, because you don't want to encourage new growth that may be caught by frost. You leave them to tick over in winter, but prune them as early as you dare towards the beginning of spring. Then they have time to build up new flowering stems by sum-

Pruning has the effect of

Like buddleia, caryopteris flowers in August and September, so needs pruning soon. It is a compact shrub, rarely as much as 4ft high and wide, with greyish-green leaves and blue flowers, particularly good in the variety 'Kew Blue'. Cut the weakest, scraggiest stems out entirely at ground level and prune the other stems back hard, cutting just above a strong shoot. In severe winters, the top growth is often cut back by frost. Your "pruning" will in fact be clearing away wood that is already dead.

Hard pruning is what makes spiracas, such as S x bumalda and S japonica, perform most spectacularly in July and August. One of the best is 'Anthony Waterer', with leaves splashed with pink and cream among the flat, crimson flowers. For the biggest flowers, be brutal. Prune all the stems down to within 3in or 4in of the ground.

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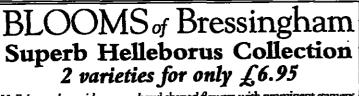
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GARDENING

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## A natural high

Strap on your crampons and practise your burn slides. Eric Kendall leads the way

The wind ripped at my body, the rain beat into with this eventuality you also practise the dig- as high as you are. And for anyone who thinks my face and the storm howled around the surrounding peaks. For a terrifying moment, I thought I was in the opening paragraph of a travel piece on the perils of booking a trek with an operator who is not Abta-affiliated. In fact, I was just having a normal day out on a winter mountaineering course in the Western

Winter in the hills promises unique thrills and challenges, but demands much more than summer walking. From December to April, science ever written. Perhaps the most releyou're almost bound to reach freezing con- vant thing to remember is that you yourself ditions at some point up a mountain, even in are the most likely trigger for any avalanche Britain. It means that being on the hills rather than the valleys involves mountaineering skills, at least as a back-up, even if you think you're just going for "a walk". Snow, ice, and the potential for avalanches will all feature.

in summer. The motivation in winter is certainly different, "Because it's there" hardly applies. In bad conditions it's more "To see if it's there".

The key to winter mountaineering is good judgement and risk assessment, getting input from all the members of a group, not simply leaving decisions to an "expert". It's vital for everyone to remember that they're not in the SAS, and that the trip doesn't have to be either miserable or a near-death experience for it to be a successful outing. The basics are common sense. Even before you step outside in the morning, detailed weather forecasts are available by phone or fax, along with avalanche reports, which can save a long hike into an unsuitable area. Not only is legwork minimised, but you're not exposed to the dangerous instinct to carry on regardless, which increases in direct proportion to the amount of effort around on crampons would also do an excel-

you've put into getting there. At the snow line, key skills training starts with ice axe arrests - lots of sliding wetly on ering down steep faces, using ice-axe belays and your backside (beginner), head first on your snow bollards, is a further aspect of moving safefront (intermediate) and head first flat on your back (advanced/ suicidal). The theory is to imitate a fall on a slope, bringing yourself to a is unprotected, relying on increasing care in rapid halt by digging your are into the snow. relation to the degree of exposure. Do look we realised that no one, other than Marigold, Get it wrong, and you risk neatly planting your down, not to give yourself an attack of verti- has managed to produce finger-bags that keep

ging-your-hands-in technique, the alpine equivalent of a drowning man chutching at driftwood.

Next on the agenda is avalanche prediction. It's a huge subject, and well worth paying close attention to. Along with daily bulletins posted locally as a guide to conditions, there's also the obvious but often overlooked point that if you can see an avalanche, then the risk of more avalanches is high. Looking around you on the hill can tell you more than all the snow that may come your way.

For analysing specific slopes, and to warm up after ice-axe drill, the Rutschblock test is ideal. Lots of digging with spade, ski or ice-axe is involved, to isolate a representative section of It can also mean stunning scenery and ac- a slope. Then you can determine the stability cess to different (often more direct) routes to of the snow by progressively loading the block the peaks; with the right snow cover you can until it slides, which gives a reasonable imclimb gullies which cascade with crumbling rock pression of how the slope as a whole will react to your walking on it. On a scale of one to seven, one means run like hell ~ which would be tricky, as the snow is so prone to sliding that it collapses the moment you isolate the block from the surrounding slope. At the more reassuring end of the scale, a seven is so secure that even a yomping yeti couldn't budge it.

The final basic skill to learn is the use of crampons, which can be dangerous in the wrong hands and even more so on the wrong feet. Putting them on is half the battle, particularly in conditions where simply tightening your hood strings is an achievement. First cramponed steps turn the world on its head. Suddenly sheet ice and hard-packed snow provide a rock-solid grip, while slabs of rock give a skittish feel. Crossing a rare patch of grass, Gary from Maidstone noticed that stomping lent job of aerating your lawn.

Basic ropework for tougher terrain or lowly around the mountains, though, for much of the time, winter walking and mountaineering axe while you continue on your way. To cope go, but so that you realise the stakes are about the water out for long.

all this is just about the serious matter of getting to the top, that's only half the story. Coming down the other side can be at least as demanding, but if you're lucky, it may afford an ice-axe-controlled burn-slide that makes the Cresta Run look like a walk in the park

Where to learn, and what you need The National Mountain Centre, Plas Y Brenin (01690 720214) offers some of the best training facilities and instruction available. They run winter courses in Wales, Scotland and the Alps. Comprehensive notes are supplied which detail experience needed and equipment required; in many cases gear is available on loan. The Scottish National Sports Centre, Glenmore Lodge (01479 861256) offers a sim-

ilar programme based at Aviemore. What you take into the mountains is fundamental to your comfort and safety. Protective clothing doesn't have to be Gore Tex, though many manufacturers use this fabric for their top-of-the-range gear. Most important are the design and fit of the garments. Lowe Alpine use their own breathable fabric, Triplepoint Ceramic, and Paramo clothing relies on regular treatment of non-waterproof fabrics for optimum breathability and water-resistance.

Boots need to be both water-resistant and suitable for use with crampons. Plastic shelled boots are frequently used, but tend to be uncomfortable if worn day in, day out. Salomon now produce leather mountaineering boots (the Super Mountain range) which include lots of innovations, derived in part from their skiboot experience. A boot which sprouts crampons from the sole unit at the touch of a button (after Rosa Kleb in From Russia With Love) is keenly awaited.

For both clothing and specialist climbing hardware, the best advice is available from your instructors, and specialist retailers such as Cotswold Outdoor (01285 643434). Half the fun of winter mountaineering is in gratifying pent-up gear lust. But keep in mind more mundane equipment, such as gloves. We wondered, for several soggy, cold hours, why our instructors had a minimum of four pairs, until



Rich pickings: winter climbing is all about being prepared

Photograph: Enc Kendali

### **GAMES**

### STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT WILLIAM HARTSTON

Do you spend eight hours and 42 minutes sleeping two hours and 33 minutes, and spend an hour eating at home, another hour socialising, and between 40 and 50 minutes on your personal care?

If all of these apply to you, then you are absolutely average according to the latest edition of Social Trends, that indispensable manual from the Office of National Statistics. But the true fascination of this document lies not in the raw figures of the individual tables of what percentage of which age group of which gender spends how long doing what. The real insights come only when you compare the figures in these tables with each other, and with other surveys that have been done in the past year.

Last year, for example, one survey found that 3 per cent of the population bath only once a week, while another totally different survey revealed that 3 per cent of married women are in love with someone other than their husbands. Quite obviously, though nobody ever pointed it out, those are the women married to the men who bath only once a week.

To take another example, 14 per cent of women, given one wish, would wish to have the housework

magically done for them. And 14 per cent of adult cent of whose conceptions have ended in abortion, I ales have cycled in the past four weeks. They probably got on their bikes to avoid having to help their wives with the housework. That picture is sadly confirmed by the statistic of 14 per cent of fatal accidents that involve drunk drivers: it's surely those 14 per cent of women, taking to drink at the prospect of all that housework their husbands won't help them with, then getting in the car and running him down on his bike.

Only last week, there was a Valentine's Day survey commissioned by Durex which found that not only do cohabiting couples make love more often than married ones, but they spend longer over it. The precise annual figures were 135 times at 16 minutes a time for married couples and 175 times at 25 minutes each for cohabitees. That's 36 hours a year married love-making and 72 hours 55 minutes unmarried. That's a difference of 36 hours and 55 minutes. And what is 36 hours and 55 minutes? It is, as a detailed study of Social Trends reveals, exactly the length of working time needed for a married couple with husband only working to earn enough to pay for two road fund licences and a pint of milk. This poor man's drunken, ungrateful spouse ~ 20 per to sober up, then got in her car, for which he paid the road tax, and mercilessly run him down just because he's too exhausted to help with the washing up. And even if he was one of the 10 per cent who sometimes do the ironing, you can be pretty sure that she'd be one of the 10 per cent who find that it improves her sex life to imagine that she's with somebody else. Probably the ironing males are none other than the 10 per cent who have a female boss.

With all this evident disharmony around, how is it that 58 per cent, in the Durex survey, reported that their sex lives are good or excellent? Once again, the answer lies in a deeper analysis of the figures. For 58 per cent pay cash for their Christmas shopping, 58 per cent of mothers would rather spend Christmas Day at home than on a beach in Australia, and 58 per cent of 8- to 10-year-olds think people look good with a tan. It all adds up to such a sorry picture of rich fathers taking children on holiday to lie in the sun in Australia over Christmas, leaving wives at home to do the housework, while they have good or excellent sex with Antipodean beauties. Bastards! Running over's too good for them. I say.

### PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

### Richard Neave, 61, medical artist

I am not a joiner of clubs, or a player of games with other people. I tend to be more solitary, as I'm not very good at ball-games. Ever since I can remember, I've enjoyed

making things. I grew up on a little farm in Sussex, and I didn't have much in the way of toys. But I liked playing with water and I'd make dams and little water-wheels that worked, and boats.

I've always liked the vision of a model boat chugging across a pond. There is something rather romantic and lovely about the idea of a thing by itself in the middle of the water with its little engine. preferably in the half-light.

I still like building and playing with model boats. Sometimes they're built out of wood; sometimes they're kits, modified. The trouble is I don't have that much time. but I like just to be able to settle down and work at it for half a day every few months.

Making things is the game, and I suppose remaking a face is the same sort of

thing. It's all about construction, or knowing how things fit together. As a child, whenever I found a fox skull, or a rabbit's skull, I'd always pick it up and look at it, to see how it went.

I suppose this is where the business of people-watching comes in. You can stand in the Underground and count the number of people with adherent earlobes and welldefined filtrums, or whatever.

This game does have its problems. because you can offend people by staring at them. It is an extremely invasive thing to do, but I have a professional interest. Rather like an architect looking at another architect's building, and thinking: "That's nice, but the pointing is a bit rough."

If you have missed the "Meet the Ancestors" series on BBC2, on which Richard Neave reconstructed British skulls, you may catch up by reading "Making Faces" by Richard Neave and John Prag (British Museum Press, £18.99). Your filtrum is the groove down the middle of your upper lip.

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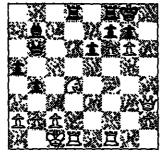
### CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

"When you get a position like this," Viswanathan Anand writes of the position in the diagram, "you go away feeling very pleased and have a warm glow for the next few games." The comment comes from a new book My Best Games of Chess (Gambit Publications, £15.99) by Anand and is typical of the irrepressible spirit of enjoyment that Anand conveys both by his moves and his comments.

In its 240 pages, the book includes 40 games and 30 combinations, played between 1986 and 1997. The annotations are a delightfully revealing mixture of deep analysis and honest reminiscences that convey a rare insight into what Anand was thinking at the time.

The diagram position comes from near the end of one of the earliest game in the book, in which Anand played White against Ninov on his way to winning the 1987 world junior championship. Black survived only one more move, resigning after 24...fxgó 25.fxg7 (25...Rxf1 26.Qh8+ Kf7 27.Rxf1+ or 25...Kxg7 26.Nxe6+ are equally hopeless).

This is the first of several games in the book in which Anand, while knowing the theory of an opening, thought up an innovation at the board. In this case it was the move 11.g4! which he says should have been answered by 11...Nxg4 12.Qg3 Nf6 13.Qxg7 Rg8 14.Qh6 when



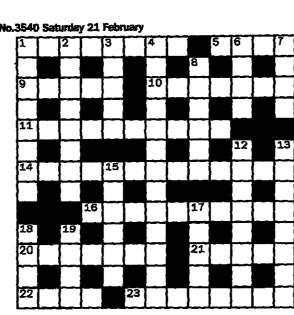
White has the advantage, but not as much as in the game. As play went, Black had to play 20...g6 leading to a poor endgame after 21.Nf5 Qxe3+ 22.Nxe3. After 21.Bxh7+! he was lost. 22...fxg6 would have been met by 24. Rxf8+ Kxf8 25.Nxeó+.

White: V Anand Black: K Ninov 1 e4 c5 14 f4 b4 2 Nf3 e6 15 Ne2 a5 16 Nbd4 Nxd4 17 Nxd4 Qb6 18 e5 Bb7 19 Rhfl dxe5

3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 5 Bd3 Bc5 6 Nb3 Ba7 20 fxe5 Rd8 7 Nc3 Nc6 21 Bxh7+ Kxh7 8 Qe2 d6 9 Be3 Bre3 22 g6+ Kg8 10 Qxe3 Nf6 23 Qb3 Nf6 11 g4 b5 24 exf6 fxg6 12 0-0-0 0-0 25 fxg7 resigns 13 g5 Ne8

"The following day." Anand writes, "I was facing Agdestein" (who was the highest-rated player in the event). "I prepared as well as I could ... and sat down hoping to play a good game." Not "hoping to win", note, but "hoping to play a good game".

### CONCISE CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

Scottish clan (8) Oil reservoir (4) Notice of intention to marry (5) Tending the sick (7)

11 First-rate quality (10) 14 Life story (13) 16 TV programmes (4,6) 20 Well-liked (7) 21 Twist and squeeze moisture from (5) 22. Ship's complement (4)

23 OK (3.5)

### DOWN

Mountain transport (5-3) Tailless domestic animals Herb (5) NCO (5-8) Component (4) Bride's attendant (4) Shopkeeper (6)

(8) 13 Vision (8) 15 Protection from rain (coll.) (6) Military potential (5) 18 Long poem (4) 19 Church architectural fea-

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12 Fair to one's opponents

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword: ACROSS: 1 Somme, 4 Fin (Something), 7 Clan, 8 Dereliet, 9 Long-drawnout, 10 Usurer, 13 Litter, 15 Bloodthirsty, 19 Gertrude, 20 Omit, 21 Tot, 22 Salad DOWN: 1 Salvo, 2 Manager, 3 Elder, 4 Faldo, 5 Necktie, 6 Trowel, 11 Subject, 12 Radius, 14 Turmoil, 16 Octet, 17 Heeds, 18 Iriad.

### BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

	Game all; dealer South North	
	<b>486</b>	
	♥Q 105	
	<b>◊10763</b>	
	<b>♦</b> K865	
West		East
<b>◆</b> A 1094		<b>◆</b> 732
♥972		♥8643
0852		0A94
<b>◆</b> 743		#AQ2
	South	
	∲KQJ5	
	♥AKJ	
	øKQJ	
	<b>♣</b> J 10 9	

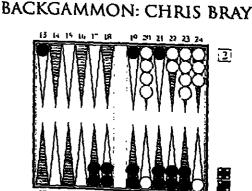
Oh dear! I shall have to give up offering well-meant advice and stick strictly to reporting facts. This deal produced a

poevish letter from a correspondent. The bidding was simple: South opened 2NT and North raised to game. West led \$4 against 3NT, obviously following my recent suggestion that the lead of a 10 against a no-trump contract implied a strong suit with two higher honours. Dummy followed with the six, and East (who had clearly noted my other recent point that, rather than make an apparently useless attempt with near garbage in partner's suit, it was more useful to give a count) thoughtfully played the two to suggest a three-card

holding. When \$6 won, declarer still had two guards in spades and he attacked clubs. Now it was too late for the defenders to get a long card in any suit working and they came to only the four obvious tricks: a spade, a diamond and two clubs.

Yes, the lead of \$10 defeats the contract when West ducks his partner's next spade return. Yes, East could have done everything that was necessary by covering S6 with his seven at trick one after which, again, West ducks the next spade returu.

But the real culprit of the hand was declarer! Why? He really should have tried \$8 from dummy at trick one - a play that could hardly cost and would have provided an unexpected third stopper in spades.



This was problem two in the Christmas Quiz. Black to play 42. Should he play: (a) 19/13 (b) 21/15 (c) 7/5\*/1\* (d) 7/5\*, 13/9?

Firstly, let's check the position of the doubling cube. Black has already doubled and therefore cannot win the game by doubling White out. This normally means that Black should play more aggressively than if the cube were in the middle.

What of our four candidate plays? We can quickly eliminate play (d). If it is right to hit it will be right to hit two men, because there will be fewer return shots and because it will lead to winning more gammons. Of the two more passive plays 19/13 is safer but provides less control of the outer boards. However, getting hit by an 8 or 10 could be disastrous and roll-outs show 19/13 to be superior. So we are down to two plays, the attacking play (c), or the passive play (a). Which is

The answer is play (c) and it's not even close. Unless White rolls an immediate 1 or double-5 he is likely to end up with two men closed out which in turn will lead to quite a few gammon losses. If White does roll a 1 then Black is certainly in some danger but both players will have a man on the bar against a 4-point board and it will be Black's turn to roll, still making him a small favourite. On the 24 rolls where White doesn't roll a 1 or 55, Black will become a massive

Having given the cube away this is exactly the sort of move Black should be looking for to bring the game to a swift conclusion. Sadly when confronted with this problem over the board, I played the weak 19/13 and was gammoned for my pusillanimity.

## First the wine, then the party

The best way to learn which wine goes with which food is by making an occasion of it, writes Sally Staples

At the end of a busy day in the office, only the stout-hearted, or those on a strict diet, may be able to face the rigours of going straight off to evening class to broaden their minds. But ome courses designed to widen horizons are et in a convivial atmosphere, round a large able laden with food and wine. And this isn't class on the art of dinner-party conversation, out one that teaches how to match different vines with food. It combines learning somehing useful with unwinding at the end of the lay, and you don't have to think about cookng dinner afterwards.

Most of the students I met were young jusiness women who wanted to be more adventurous when buying wine to complement their cooking, or needed to know more about selecting wine when planning to entertain clients.

Among the few men sipping and sampling was a ship broker, Jonathan, who said he was embarrassed that he always had to hand the wine list to his guest when taking clients out to lunch. "I wanted to know more about what wines went with what food, and this course does just that," he said. "It's a relaxed and informal way of learning what I need to know."

The tutor, Jackie Graves, asks the class to bring their own tasting glasses to the venue, at Westminster City School in London, and she suggests they refrain from eating spicy food at lunch time, as this impairs the palate. She begins by offering three wines for the students to

On the night I visited, these were chablis premier cru, sancerre and chianti classico - all bought from Wine Rack at £7.99 a bottle. Everyone was given a tasting sheet and invited to write down their opinion of the wine's appearance, bouquet and taste. The emphasis is not on what is right or wrong, but on what they feel they like.

"The course is for people who don't know much about wine and want to learn more," said Jackie. "We deal with wines whose names they will have come across in restaurants, and the idea is to let them explore tastes for themselves, rather than stipulate that specific wines must go with certain dishes."

Confidence visibly grew with each sip, and even the quieter members of the group started volunteering views about the flavour of gooseberries, hints of spices, or an oily, butterv texture.

Once each wine had been tasted and astic cutlery and started handing out food. First came avocado vinaigrette. Evervone was asked to taste each wine and write down which one best complemented the dish. Next was avocado with a prawn mayonnaise sauce, then cold lemon chicken, then plain roast chicken with sage and onion stuffing, and finally a garticky duck pâté. With six bottles of wine between a dozen tasters, and plenty of food on the table, the class developed like a linner party, with everyone joining in the dis-

Elmar, an accountant, had signed up for he course with her flatmates, insurance broer Deborah, and Angela who works for a oftware company.

"I had been to wine tastings before, but it nakes a difference when you are tasting food t the same time." said Elmar. "I eat out quite lot and it makes it more interesting to know omething about the wine you are drinking. dso, we all cook in the flat and it's fun to arn more about the wine we buy."

Across the table was Carlos, from Spain, ho works in the catering industry and wants ) be a sommelier.

Another taster with ambitions for a career cooking was 24-year-old Emma, from Es-

"I used to do home economics. I love ooking and I eat out a lot, so this course eally suits me. Another reason I came is that heard that loads of men come on it, and you et asked out afterwards. I suppose that's why here are so many women here - they've all reard that," she said with a rueful grin.

Jackie prefaced the evening with a runlown on each wine sampled, so students can learn that chablis is made from the chardonnay grape and sancerre from the sauvignon blanc variety. She warned against buying a cheap £4 bottle of chablis, and urged her students to go only for the premier cru. The next week's session was to include German riesling, fitou and fleurie, to be tasted with goats' cheese, Parma ham and melon, lobster pâté, roast pork, and pork and mushroom meat loaf. In other sessions, Jackie will deal with pudding wines.

At the end of the evening a vote was taken on which wine best matched each dish. Jackie gave her view, but occasionally she may be outvoted by her students. It may not be traditional, but in 1998, if you prefer a chianti with avocado vinaigrette, or a chablis with sage and onion stuffing - then that's fine.

The six-week course costs between £27 and £33, plus a £50 fee for the food and wine. There are also courses on French wine appreciation. Both are run by Westminster Adult Education Services (0171-286 1900). Jackie Graves also offers classes for wine studies and the World of Wine certificate course at Kensington and Chelsea College (0171-573 5333).



Off the rails: a wider, wilder view of Kent, above; the coast at Deal, below

Photograph: John Voos

## White cliffs and bovver boots

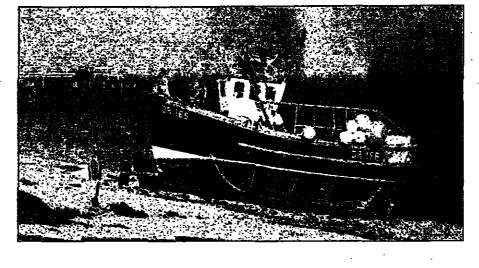


Matthew Brace continues his series on great short railway journeys with a trip through the seamy side of Kent

In contrast to the other train journeys in this series, this week's route presents the armchair traveller with the grittier side of life in Britain. No one would argue that this trip is picturesque, though it does open up part of the South-east that is definitely not on the tourist track. To add to your woes, you will have to change trains at Ramsgate in order to complete the trail to our journey's end at Margate.

The trip starts handsomely enough, with the white cliffs of Folkestone and Dover standing proudly in the sunlight. They are so quintessentially English, they almost make homecoming ferry passengers burst into choruses of "Land of Hope and Glory" as they arrive from the Continent. Taking a train journey along this famous coast, however, you realise that the celebrated cliffs are not as high and mighty as they sometimes seem.

Leaving Folkestone en route to Dover, the train bowls along next to the Channel shore, with France visible on a clear day. The cliffs rising to the landward side looked only about 100ft high, a fraction of the height they appear from out at sea. Along the track, big chunks of chalk that have become



dislodged are propped up against wire mesh fences where they lie looking bizarrely like blocks of feta cheese.

For a coastal route, this short train journey offers surprisingly few sea views. You can see the waves as you approach the impressive bulk of Dover Castle, but they soon disappear behind the rooftops of the town. Instead, the track winds inland through tunnels cut into the chalk.

Most of Kent is cosy, characterised by oast-houses and small villages, but the landscape on this extreme eastern edge is uncharacteristically flat and deserted. It is more akin to the countryside across the Channel. Anyone who has travelled on the Eurostar to Paris will have noticed the difference between the relatively cluttered appearance of central Kent, with its hedges, fields and settlements, and the vast, unpopulated expanses of Normandy. If the Eurostar followed this route through the east of the county before submerging, passengers would get a much better idea of the sort of scenery to expect in France.

which the train runs through wide, chalky fields. Earlier this week, spring was waiting in the wings: buds looked almost ready to burst, the smell of early blossom filled the air and seaguils were sunbathing in the warm, coastal light. Children at a small gypsy encampment stopped hanging out the

family washing and waved at us as we passed. From the train you do not see much of the small town of Walmer, other than modern, brutal-looking housing estates. But Walmer is well worth noting. for it has a significant place in history: this was where Julius Caesar is believed to have stepped on British soil for the first time.

After the station here, the train heads for Deal, where sheep graze on rugby pitches in the town centre, and then on to Sandwich, through more fen-like fields. Sandwich has a pretty church and clapperboard houses, common in this part of Britain, and a whitewashed windmill on the outskirts of town. Farther down the line is its modern equivalent, a wind turbine.

The train from Folkestone and Dover ends at Martin Mill is the first station past Dover, after Ramsgate where you must change platforms and

catch a London train that starts here and heads for Victoria station. It was appropriate that I found myself squeezed in among a group of middle-aged, overweight football fans heading for a London derby between Arsenal and Chelsea. This part of Kent has often been described as being Cockneyfied beyond all recognition. "It was all right before it got full of London scum," I later overheard one native Margate resident say.

The fans talked about how well the "boys" would do, and whether they would get to Wembley this year - and they scolded a younger member of the group for not bringing enough bags of crisps to munch. They were harmless enough, but I was glad I met them as they were cracking open their first cans of beer, and not as they were coming home later that night. They chatted through Broadstairs, once home to Charles Dickens, and into Margate, where I got off and left them to it.

It is a long time since people came to Margate for health reasons. A sea-bathing infirmary was established here in the 18th century, when it was widely thought that salt water was good for the body both for bathing in and for drinking. Since then Margate has developed a different, and offputting, reputation. During the Seventies and Eighties it was the battlefield for many a skinhead scrap. and today it still has an air of tension and violence.

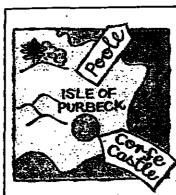
After a bag of chips, a stroll through Margate's dirty streets and a swift pint in a run-down pub where former addicts were comparing hard drug substitutes while their children played under the tables. I ran for the next train. This is a part of Kent tourists do not usually see, and now I know why.

### On the footplate

der 16) day return £3.05

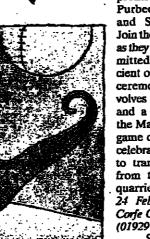
When to go: trains run about once an hour and the journey takes half-an-hour Who to call: National Rail Enquiries 0345 484950 How much: adult day return £6.10, children (un-

What to see: hop off at Broadstairs to look at Dickens's house



### WHAT, WHEN, WHERE

If you're not busy flipping pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, you could pop in to the Fox in Corfe Castle, Dorset, and have a pint of Bishop's Tipple with the ap-



prentices of the Purbeck Marblers and Stonecutters. Join them at midday as they wait to be admitted to the ancient order. After a ceremony that involves a penny loaf and a peppercorn, the Marblers play a game of football to celebrate their right to transport stone from the Purbeck quarries to Poole. 24 Feb, The Fox, Corfe Castle, Dorset (01929 480449). Sally Kindberg

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DISCOUNTS FOR COUPLES PETS GO FREE 01756 702200 UK Travel also appears on page 8.

## Lipinski's art makes lasting impression

Mike Rowbottom reports from Nagano

AN all-American drama played itself out to an astonishing denouement in the women's figure skating final here last night. Michelle Kwan, the gold medal favourite and media darling, was the winner, but Tara Lipinski, the sequinned waif, was the win-

ningest. Looking on as the 15-yearold Lipinski took the title with an exuberant and almost faultless performance, one experienced American skating observer spoke for a nation. "Oh my God," he said. "Oh my

God. Un. Believable." After her sublime performance at last month's US Championships in Philadelphia, where she had recaptured her title from Lipinski, the 17-year-old Kwan arrived here as most people's choice for the title. It was widely assumed that, if she made no mistakes, the gold was hers.

As she left the ice last night, she was smiling broadly. The bouquets came bouncing onto the ice from all around the arena. Unlike in Philadelphia, where she had scored 15 maximum 6.0 marks, the judges were more conservative - she had nine out of nine 5.9s for artistic impression, but her technical merit marks were a little down - four 5.8s and five 5.7s.

Nevertheless, as she left the arena, it seemed she had done enough to realise the goal to which she has dedicated herself for so many years. Lipinski, who succeeded Kwan as world champion last year, had fallen in the US championships. But this time she was unfaltering radiant, even. As she registered each jump and combination, her face broke into an

expression of delight. In the past, she has been crit-

bat without artistic merit. Last night her performance had, if not the grace of Kwan, then an expression of real emotion. At the end of her performance, she carecred into the centre of the arena like a kid racing to open her Christmas presents, shaking her fists in triumph.

Back in the kiss and tell section, her expression as the first line of judges' marks, for technical merit, came up, was momentarily one of terror. They were significantly better than Kwan's - six 5.9s, three 5.8s and it was as if the enormity of what she was about to have confirmed suddenly hit her.

The next row of figures for

five 5.8s - and a 6-3 split decision in her favour installed her as the youngest individual gold medallist in Winter Games history. She is 60 days younger than Sonja Heine was when she won this title in 1928.

"I didn't think about winning, or about beating any-body, Lipinski said. "I just didn't want to come off the ice disappointed. I don't remember running at the end. I was just so happy at the time, because it was the Olympics, and I had skat-

ed great." Coming into last night's free favour. "I always like to be the

Kwan said she had come off the ice happy with her own performance, but accepted that it had not matched her inspirational effort at last month's national championships. "In Philadelphia I was more free, I was flying," she said. "Tonight I was more cautious. I took my time and did one thing at a time. It seemed like I was in my own

world, like I didn't open up and really let go. In contrast, Lipinski emoted from the start. "It was one of the best performances I have ever given, both technically and emotionally," she said. Kwan did not contest the award of the title - but then she had not seen Lipinski skating, choosing to talk to her mother instead.

\*There was disappointment when I saw Tara's marks," she said. "And a few tears. But I'm going to keep fighting. I'll be at the 2002 Olympics, so there is one more shot. I will only be 21 -who knows? But I think I can walk away from her happy. Because - c'est la vie, right? However hard you work, you cannot guarantee you are going to win gold. The medal isn't the colour I wanted, but I'll take it."

The spectacle was likely to have been a gold medal one as far as the US TV rights holders to the Games, ČBS, were concerned. After seeing the US and Canada drop out of contention for tomorrow's ice hockey final, they needed all the ratings they could get.

When Lipinski was just two years old, her father, Jack, recalled last night, she watched the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles on TV. Seeing a medal ceremony, she took a copperprogramme in second place af . ware bowl, turned it upside ter Wednesday's short pro- down and stood on top of it. gramme had worked in her "She asked her mum for flowers and a ribbon," Jack Lipinunderdog," she said. "I was ski said, "She didn't know there was a medal."



### icised for being a robotic acro- very motivated." Olsson and crew rise to occasion

on Magano

IN the land of the Rising Sun. Sean Olsson still had to endure the longest night of his bobsleighing career knowing Britain's first medal of the Winter Olympics was within grasp.

The British champion and his Zanussi crew of fellow paratrooper Dean Ward, "civvy" Courtney Rumbolt and Royal Marine Paul Attwood, were in second place overnight in the four-man competition after heavy rain forced the cancellation of yesterday's second run on Nagano's Spiral track.

And for once, rain was good news for British sporting aspirations because a three-run race offers more of an advantage to crews already in the medal positions than those looking to catch up.

Olsson had promised that the British quartet would be "awesome" off the top and he was true to his word as they smashed the previous start record from the No 1 slot in the

Their time over the first 50 metres of 4.83 seconds was



The British bobsleigh crew, led by Sean Olsson, in action yesterday

only bettered by Germany's Christoph Langen who clocked a staggering 4.78 seconds on his way to snatching the lead in a new track record time of 52.70.

But Olsson, who produced the run of his life to get down in 52.77 - just 0.6 seconds outside the previous track record - still clocked the fastest speed

"We've got to be more than happy with the way things have

gone so far," said the 30-yearold Para, seeking to become Britain's first Olympic medal winner since Tony Nash drove at Garmish-Partenkirchen in Robin Dixon to gold in Innsbruck 34 years ago. Since then Britain have not won an Olympic medal outside the ice

At the last Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, when Olsson finished eighth. team-mate Mark Tout's fifth place was the bronze medals at Winterberg

Brian Shimer of America who was in fourth place.

best British performance in the

four man since Frederick

McEvoy won the Bronze medal

1936. "I'd have obviously settled

for being in a medal place at the

end of the first day, so it's

tremendously pleasing to be

right up there," said Olsson,

but we've still got it all to do

"We won both our world cup

over the final two runs.

Under Olympic rules, a minimum two runs must take place for medals to be awarded. At Grenoble in 1968, Eugenio Monti won the Gold over two runs after officials cancelled the second day because of a thaw. The same had happened in St Moritz in 1928 while, four years later in Lake Placid, the fourman event was delayed until after the closing ceremony.

and La Plagne this season in

rainy conditions so hopefully

Olsson held a 0.11-second

advantage over third-placed

Christian Reich of Switzerland,

and was 0.16sec ahead of the

previous track record holder.

that's a good omen."

Having gone off first yesterday. Olsson put the Union Jack at the top of the Olympic leader board for the first time since Tout and Lenny Paul led the two man competition after the first two runs at Albertville

in 1992. However, they slipped back on the second day to finish sixth which was the only reminder Olsson needed yesterday to take nothing for granted.

Photograph: AFP Results from the Winter Olympics

Women's glant station

1 Deborah Compagnoni (t) 2-th 5059ec

2 Alexandra Meissmitzer (Act) 2:5259

3 Karla Setzinger (Ger) 2:5259

3 Karla Setzinger (Ger) 2:5275

4 M Erd (Ger) 2:5272, § S Lehand-Chiniland
(fr) 2:5327 § H Zurbrigger (Sent) 2:5361: 7

A Ortusson (Sent) 2:5281: 8 S Parasann (th)
2:5409: 9 B Heet (Leoft) 2:5470: 10 A Flemmen (Nor) 2:5494 Britisht S Ormond did not 

o-Stirmemenn (Ger) 6:5965

2 Gunde Niemsner-Stimemann (1987) 6:3805
3 Lyudmilla Prolascheva (Kazak) 7:1114
6 B De Loor (Neth) 7:118: 6 T De Jong (Neth)
7:277; 8 C Zjistra (Neth) 7:258; 7 K Holum
(US) 7:1420; 6 E Hurrysdy (Aut) 7:523; 9 E
Belor (II) 7:558; 10 J Rodriguez (US) 7:1628.
FIGURE SKATING
Wormen's Brast standings
1 Tara Liphineld (US) 2.0pts
2 Michaele (Kwarr (US) 2.0pts
2 Michaele (Kwarr (US) 2.5
4 M Butyrsloaya (Rus) 53, 5 i Sunskaya (Rus)
75, 6 V Gusmerol (Fr) 100; 7 E Sobolova (Rus)
120; 8 T Malinina (Uzbek) 125; 9 E Liasthenko
(Uir) 135; 10 S Bonaly (Fr) 140.

ICE HOCKEY

### Czechs ensure gold will elude Gretzky after shoot-out win

THE Czech Republic, con querors of the stellar United States ice hockey team, yester day accounted for another of the game's giants when they defeated Canada 2-1 in a shoot-out after overtime in the semi-final.

In so doing, they also reduced one of the game's greats. Wayne Gretzky, to a silent, dejected figure. The greatest scorer in ice hockey history will probably never win the one major prize he does not already possess: an Olympic gold medal.

"It's devastating. It's the worst feeling in the world Gretzky said yesterday, talki g slowly as he choked back teas. "Truth of the matter is, this probably is my last international competition. I guess a gold medal wasn't on the casts for my career. After Dominik Hasek had

thwarted Canada's Brendin Shanahan, the Czechs mobbii their goaltender in celebration while the Canadians consold their goalie, Patrick Roy. It ws about a minute before Greiz moved. Then he slowly got in and joined his team-mates for the post-game handshake.

He had his first chance at a Olympic gold medal because th NHL, for the first time, let it players participate. Now, the best he can do is win a bronz today. "Words can't ever describe how bad I feel," said the 37-year-old Gretzky, who holds or shares 61 NHL record and has won four Stanley Cups "Each and every time I put or that Canadian sweater, I'm proud. This is so tough."

His American NHL colleagues clearly found defeat tougher still. United States players smashed windows and damaged Olympic village rooms in the wake of the team's early exit from the tournament, police and tournament officials

have announced. However, officials were not planning to file criminal charges but will seek financial compensation for damages from the incident, which took place less than three hours after the "Dream Team" lost 4-1 to the Czechs in the quarter-finals.

Olympic village officials had tried to assess the damage on dnesday night after the US delegation leader reported the incident, but respected a request that they wait until the athletes had left the village. Exacts how many players were involved and the extent of the damage was not certain. spokesman added.

This was not the first case ( vandalism at these Games: th Austrian snowboarding work champion, Martin Freindanet had his Games accreditation revoked by delegation official after trashing his hotel room the wake of a disappointing Olympic showing.

Having a smashing time ye terday, in the strictly legal sens was the Italian Deborah Cor pagnoni, who went into t Olympic record books whi she won the women's gian slalom for her third gold med in three successive Games.

The 27-year-old won in combined time of 2min 50.5% to finish more than a 1.5\$ ahead of second-placed Alexa dra Meissnitzer of Austria as s became the first female Alp skier to manage such Olympic run.

Compagnoni won her fi gold in the Super-G Albertville in 1994 and th took the giant slalom two yes later in Lillehammer befo yesterday's success.

## Protests, plain-clothes police and the happy music of mayhem



ROWBOTTOM

ON THE ODDBALL WINTER GAMES

THE SYMBOLIC doves of peace had been released at the opening ceremony - inflatable doves in this case, bumping and stream of air bubbles.

Proclaiming themselves as the "Games from the Heart, Together with Love", the 18th Winter Olympics were offi-

cially underway. Turning from the television, I pressed on with my work until I was distracted by what sounded like someone canvassing for an election. The voice, issuing from a loudspeaker, was that of a woman. And she was speaking in English.

"IOČ go home. You are all assholes. You have shit for brains. You are all such bloody bastards..."

Staring down from my seventh-floor window at the busy road intersection below I saw a tall, white van, its sides covered rising into the grey sky like a in slogans, driving slowly along with its lights flashing.

"Go home Samaranch. You have shit for brains. Kiss my ass, Mr Prick. I really hate to speak to you."

The rhetoric continued, even though the van had now been manoeuvred to a standstill by two white cars full of men who, I could only assume. were plain-clothes police. Grabbing my coat, I went out

to take a closer look. Whoever the protesters were they had made an impressive job of the slogans, which were Japanese on one side and English on the other.

killed. \$20 billion of tax were gone. Dirty noble Samaranch. Burglar Tsutzumi. Sex King Clinton. The Sun Murdoch. Queen Elizabeth spoiled richest. Vatican. Monsanto. Coke. No Yakuza. No IOC. Go home. F- you s-o-b. Sponsored by Cathay Pacific Airways."

If the Sex Pistols had ever released a second album, it would have done nicely for the

These people were clearly not happy about many things. The van doors were covered with photocopies of a 1989 story in The Sun concerning rightwing Japanese protests against the Queen. The Sun's hugely amusing cartoon of the time, showing Prince Philip baring his

"One Million of Trees were backside to the coffin of Emperor Hirohito, also featured. Returning to my room, I set-

tled down to work once again. Presently, my labours were disturbed by a woman's voice. And she was speaking in English. Go home Samaranch. Go home IOC, You are all assholes

and sons of bitches..." The van was heading slowly back into the centre of Nagano, accompanied by the

two cars. Why it was allowed to do so was beyond comprehension. Could it be that the police did not understand English sufficiently to realise what was being said? That seemed

unbelievable. A member of a Japanese television crew, who had also wit-

been allowed to proceed on the basis of freedom of speech. That too seemed unbelievable. But then there are many things about these Games which have been hard to credit.

Witnessing the thunderous collision of national egos in the ice hockey match between Canada and the United States. I had difficulty reconciling the maybem of general play with

the music which punctuated it. Canada's bear-with-a-sorehead captain, Eric Lindros, rips an opponent's headguard off with the ferocity of his challenge. But suddenly all the players are idly gliding and circling as Reginald Dixon-type organ music marks a break in

er Gary Suter is slammed into the hoards by a double bodycheck. Suddenly more organ music to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it" breaks the flow. And the audience clap.

The incongruity is fascinating. It's like playing "The Magic Roundabout" at a Mike Tyson fight. And yet the organisers are

clearly anxious to avoid the wrong kind of accompaniment. "Please refrain from making noise that may interfere with the game," we were warned by the announcer.

As curious, in a different way, are the scenes played out in the "kiss and cry" corner of the figure skating rink.

You are a female skater. don't protest.

You have just fallen on your backside while attempting your first triple axel. You have subsequently bottled out of your triple loop and now you have returned to sit alongside your large, fur-coated coach and

await the judges' marks. The cameras zoom into your face. Your make-up is smudged with tears. As you look up and see the first set of marks - 4.1. 3.9, 4.1... - you are obliged to make small talk. Here come the second set of marks for artistic impression. 4.0, 4.1, 4.2...

How wonderful it would be to see a cornered under-achiever rise and give the nine judges a one-fingered salute, I don't know how these skaters put up with it. You wonder why they

## 17/PHOTOSHO



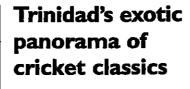






**PHOTOGRAPHS** BY DAVID **ASHDOWN** 





Over the last fortnight the pic-turesque panorama of the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain, Trinidad, has provided the backdrop to two of the most compelling Test matches of modern times, which more than made up for the fiasco in Kingston. From the enthralled observers of the President's Box (bottom) to a noisy crowd where the umbrella was

noisy crowd where the umbrella was noisy crowd where the umbrella was
the ultimate accourrement – being
useful against both sun and rain –
the atmosphere was always goodhumoured despite the tension of
both games. Even the toss seemed
to be fun and there could be no more
appropriate antidote for the anxious
appetite than hot roti – a fantastic
farrago of fried meat or vegetables
and notato wrapped in bread.

farrago of fried meat or vegetables and potato wrapped in bread.

One of England's most memorable moments in the second Test was the dismissal of the West Indies captain, Brian Lara, caught by Michael Atherton (right) off Angus Fraser in the first innings. England's most successful bowler in the Caribbean now seems to be univer-Caribbean now seems to be univer-Caribbean now seems to be universally known as "the old warhorse" and his stock in trade, apart from accuracy, is a peculiar hangdog expression which is best seen when runs are being scored off him (left).

When the dust settled, the series was level at 1-1, with all to play for as the Caribbean carnival moves on to Georgetown, Guyana, for the fourth Test, which starts on Friday

fourth Test, which starts on Friday

27 February.

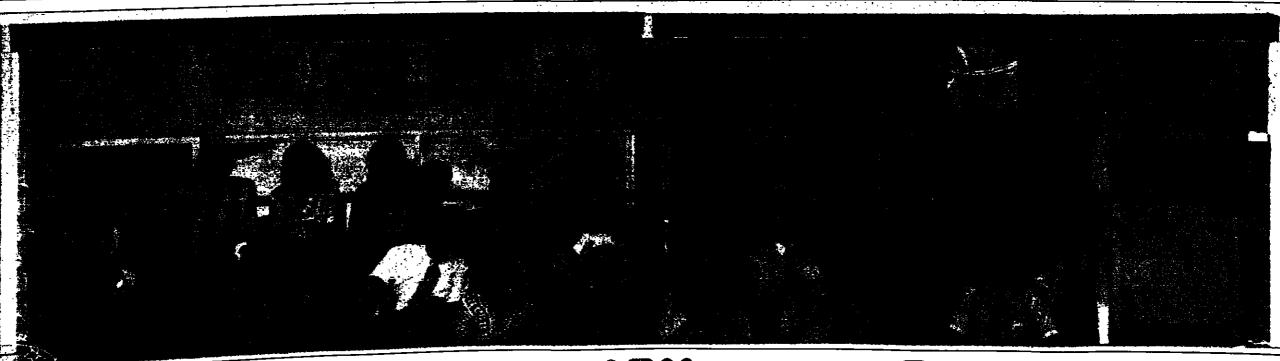
Copies of these photographs – and any others by the Independent and Independent on Sunday photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Polyant Halland and Independent Payard Payar Robert Hallam – can be ordered by telephoning 0171 293 2534.





s ensure ill <sub>elude</sub>

ry after out win



Cheltenham is less than a month away and the Irish have their cash ready to pile on this year's certainty. Richard Edmondson reports

THERE are priests and pros- an expansive parabola felt sure titutes at the Cheltenham Festival, but the profession which most interests the visiting Irish is the banker, and that does not mean the plutocrats from the

horse which appears at Cheltenham every 12 months. If it the bookmakers. It it wins it is everyone else, the thousands that back it and the service industries of Cotswolds restaurants, hotels and watering holes that meet their every need. The people who attend in addition to the priests probably do better business as well.

The burden of stimulating to be the same. the Gloucestershire economy in under four weeks' time at National Hunt racing's fiesta will fall on a white-faced horse admirably built for carrying such a load. Florida Pearl looks as though he belongs in a circus, albeit not under a spangled acrobat but rather as part of the elephant troupe.

The six-year-old is a massive horse with a similar reputation and if his unbeaten record is arrested in the Royal SunAlliance Novices' Chase the faces in the stands will be longer than a gasman's mackintosh.

Florida Pearl is trained in the Danoli country of Co Carlow by Willie Mullins. Willie knows what it is like to win at the Festival as both jockey and trainer, and, most of all, he knows what it is like to be supervising a national treasure. He was assistant to his father Paddy during the incredible years of "The Mare". Dawn Run reached such celebrity that like "Himself" before her, she became recognised by the simplest of epithets.

Florida Pearl could not be more different from her in temperament. "Everyone that comes to the yard wants to see him and he's such a lovely laidback horse that he smells and nuzzles them and everything," Mullins says. "Dawn Run was completely different. It was a job Aintree entrants River Mandate, even to get in her box and even then you could do it only on her D'Estruval among the runners, terms. Once you were in there while at Newcastle Scotton she'd keep her eye on you all the

time so you had to be careful." Indeed, they still talk at Doninga of the day Dawn Run kicked a yet square in the chest as he was trying to administer an injection. Everyone who saw

he would land dead until the loop ended in a pile of straw.

Florida Pearl has already proved he is good by handing out several thrashings, Now connections are hoping that, like The Irish banker is in fact a Dawn Run, he will also show the great courage that only the finest possess. "You get plenty loses it is tremendous news for of horses who can show you speed and go past another, but tremendous news for just about not so many who can come back when another comes at them," Mullins says. "And then there's the very few who keep coming back two or three times against the very best horses. You need that heart that Dawn Run had. Defeat wasn't in her vocabulary and I'm just hoping he's going

> Willie Mullins was riding on Irish tracks while still under the tutelage of Cistercian monks at boarding school. His first contact with Cheltenham glory came when Hazy Dawn won the National Hunt Chase in 1982. Roly Daniels, the country singer and mare's owner, celebrated by warbling through Danny Boy in the unsaddling enclosure.

> That day, a St Patrick's Day, said to be the only occasion that Paddy Mullins, Hazy Dawn's trainer, has ever shown emotion at the racecourse. It was the first time one of his offspring had partnered a Festival winner.

Two years later, and the day after Dawn Run had won the Champion Hurdle, Willie Mullins won the National Hunt Chase again with Macks Friendly. It was an afternoon when the jockey wondered if he had overdone the partying the night be-

THE mysteries of race-planning

dictate that today's two most

valuable races are both Grand

National rehearsals. Chepstow's

version, the John Hughes Grand

National Trial, promises to be

the most informative with the

St Mellion Fairway and Destin

Banks, Samlee and Linden's

Lotto are worthy of considera-

Typically, though, what wins

today may have little bearing on

the result on 4 April. The novice

Ottowa (2.15), deemed too im-

mature for Aintree, can take

tion for the National itself.



Bite but no malice: The friendly Florida Pearl after his latest win with Willie Mullins (right)

straight on Macks Friendly he could not see the final fence and initially believed he had strayed on to the hurdles course. Only when the last obstacle appeared

did the self-admonishment stop. The six-times amateur champion is perhaps most famous for the two distinct orbits he used to take around the racecourse, either a Mercury or a Pluto but nothing in between. In winning the 1983 Foxhunters

Indian Arrow and Ottowa ready for the long haul

at Uttoxeter last time when

Kamikaze's pilot ejected and left

charge, he is a considerable

RICHARD EDMONDSON

NAP: Muskhill

(Chepstow 1.15)

(Warwick 3.40)

Newcastle's trial, the Eider

Chase, may fall to Indian Arrow

(3.05), a horse who had been

campaigned almost exclusively

over two miles until a couple of

months ago. When he was tried

force in his own right.

despite being fortunate to win a revelation and, although he

out of the shadow of the stands

in particular, a favoured Mullins tactic was to go right round the I haven't". outside in search of better going. Sometimes it worked, but other times they had to go out looking for him with torches.

However, by the time he had partnered Wither Or Which to success in the Festival bumper two years ago the infatuation a natural worrier, but it is not was disappearing. "I was getting a message that nature itself off horses still concentrating on the race and not able to com- head reveals that the good at Liverpool on Atha Cliath he municate properly with the Lord has taken some of his hair piloted a course so tight that his owners," Mullins says. "By the away to save for later.

Chepstow's trial and prove that. Wincanton last time he proved stages of a race at Ascot last

may be too far out of the hand-

icap to make an impact at Ain-

the race to Paul Nicholls's tree, he should be able to cope Fiddling The Facts (3.45) can

with another horse stepping

up in trip here, Linden's Lotto.

to Muskhill (1.15), who was

through his paces by the former

novice hurdle at Warwick with

Samuel Wilderspin (4.10).

fore. As he swung into the boots were scoured with paint end I wasn't enjoying it. People on his return. Yet in soft ground told me that when I stopped riding I would miss it desperately.

> Now, aged 41, Mullins is happily established at Closutton, close to his father's yard. About 200 yards from the stables is a reminder of where most dreams

> end, the village graveyard. The trainer tells you he is not forwards. The top of Mullins's

> time, may just outpoint Ashwell

Boy. There are more top novices

on show at Chepstow, where

Nick Henderson has advised

cal from Champion Hurdle bet-

problem. Sharpical, as low as

derson said. "But we are never

outjump Escartefigue.

Chepstow's opener may go bookmakers to remove Sharpi-

A trial for Cheltenham's horse and it's unlikely he'll run.

Arkle Chase is the main attrac- I'm not ruling him out com-

bred by Pat Eddery and was put ting because the horse has a leg

There have been stories emanating from Ireland that Mullins already considers Florida Pearl to be as good as Dawn Run and the only remaining question is whether he will transpire to be the equal of Arkle. This, however, was not the tone of our conversation.

Indeed, Willie Mullins is a worried man when he considers how fortunate he has been with the bay's health. Bacteria does not stay away for ever, and not all the stones are kicked off the gallops each morning.

In addition, there is the concern that a beast which showed as much flashing acceleration as Florida Pearl did in last year's Cheltenham bumper may not have the stamina for National Hunt's most prized assignment. "He stayed a trip in a point-topoint but obviously it's different against top-class horses," Mullins says. "We're just hoping he runs well this year and earns a

no matter what it costs, they always dream it's going to be a champion Flat jockey this week. 14-1 for Cheltenham, took a Festival horse. About 99 times His trainer, David Nicholson, knock during his impressive out of a hundred they're disruns two in this event and may win in the Tote Gold Trophy last appointed so at least we're

a horse. He's the banker.

yah boo to you with knobs on!" Bounders who break the 11th commandment and get caught can be warned off ie, banned from every raceanything from a year or so to OF BETTING the rest of their lives, though to incur this ultimate sanction, their crime would need to be beinous indeed (putting too much water in the Senior Steward's whisky, for example, or failing to stand to atanthem). The main problem with warning off, however, is

and it is not unknown for a

supposedly disqualified per-

son to be seen lurking in the

background, grinning broad-

ly, as a trophy is presented to

a close relative at one of the

cads some people can be.

W is for ...

Warning off: The ultimate sanction under the Law According to the Jockey Club.

and effectively a variation on "we're not going to let you

Whip: Otherwise known as the stick or the persuader, although any persuasion involved will be of the less-than-gentle variety pioneered by the Krays. In recent vears, the Jockey Club has all but eradicated the sort of outrageous abuse of the whip which was once common, particularly when the money was down on Irish raiders at the big National Hunt meetings. There was, for example, the jockey on Attitude Adjuster in a mid-Eighties

Grand National who started fore Becher's the first time around, and did not stop for Preventing abuse of horses, wrong but also dreadful PR. is a laudable aim. An unformany punters are in complete agreement - until their horse has half a length to make up

which point the jockey could

probably attach its tail to the

National Grid and be given

misuse will always be fuzzy,

but at present the Club de-

serves credit for treading a fair

Gold Cup entry next year.

"When people buy a horse, also be on the mark in the week. "It's responding," Hen- somewhere with this one.

"I know people are looking going to take chances with this at him now, and I have to keep telling myself that he's just a horse." But Florida Pearl is tion at Warwick and Lake Kari- pletely but for betting purpos- much, much more. He's not just

turned to the weighing room and tipped the scales with for a few years yet.

Offa's Dvke.



play our game any more, so GREG WOOD THE A-Z

pretty much the same burden as they did on the way out. This also marks the point at which the result is official for tention for the national betting purposes, and no subsequent change, be it for a failed drug test or reversal on that it is difficult to enforce, appeal of a stewards enquiry, will make a slip for the runner-up any less worthless. It is also worth noting. of course, that all tickets should be retained until the weigh-in announcement. smaller tracks. What utter rather than flung floorwards the instant the winner passes the post. One familiar figure on northern tracks used to be known as the Aeroplane, thanks to his habit of hanging around the bars waiting for a late and unexpected enquiry to be announced, and then swooping on every discarded ticket in sight in the hope of finding a few for a promoted winner.

Weight-for-age: Scale devised more than a century ago by Admiral Rous, which takes account of the different stages of development of horses from different generthrashing his horse shortly be- ations and thus allows them to compete on fair terms. In the first two weeks of July, for the remainder of the race. example, a three-year-old which takes on a four-yearwhich is not only morally old over a mile and a quarter will receive 13th, while over five furlongs in October. tunate fact, though, is that a two-year-old will get 17lb from a three-year-old, while the same three-year-old. which by now will be close to in the final 200 yards, at full maturity, can expect to receive just a single pound from an older horse. None of this is to be confused with the benefit of the doubt. The what happens when you try dividing line between ac- to get a drink at the average ceptable encouragement and racecourse bar. That's wait

Women: Who make up alpath through the minefield. most 50 per cent of the crowd at major meetings, Welshing: A failure to pay a but are a rare sight inside gambling debt. The origin of most betting shops. This only the term is unclear, but there goes to show, of course, that is certainly no evidence that the average woman has far the reliability of either a more taste than the average punter of bookmaker de- man, although to be fair, pends on whether they orig- most sensible bookmakers inate on the western side of are now doing all they can to make their shops more appealing to female customers. Weighed in: Announcement Since the most effective meawhich confirms that all the sure, though, would be to bar riders in a race have re- most of their existing clients, that status quo may prevail

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### the medico travelling through

Lingfield HYPERION 1.50 KI Chi Saga 2.20 Aquavita 2.55 Without Friends 3.25 Witchfinder 3.55 Tangerine Flyer

GOING: Slow, STALLS: Inside, except \$7 & Im (outside).

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low for 51 & 61.

Left-hand, sharp course (Equitrack surface).

Course is SE of town on B2028. Station editions course. ADMISSION: Cuto & Family Enclosure 210. CAR PARIC: Cuto E7; rest free.

LEADING TRANSERS: G L Moore 79-601 (\$1154), R Hamon 46-336 (\$1776), Lord Huntingdon 40-208 (\$254), J Berry 32-54 (2084).

LEADING JOCKEYS: A Clark 70-549 (\$2594), S Winterorth 51-324 (\$530). D Holland 45-207 (\$2724), J Onton 32-823 (\$534).

334 (153%), D Holland 45-207 (217%), J Chimn 33-223 (53%).

• AVOURTES: 701-2nz 53.2%)
BLINCERED FIRST TIME: Rivers Bagic, Sendblaster (150); Forgotten Times (visored) (3.25); Call The Boss (4.25).

1.50 MERLIN SELLING HANDICAP (CLASS F) (DIV I) £3,000 added 1m 

00070- CROAGH PATRICK (J10) J Fox 68 5 ... Dane O'Neil 1 60440 RIVERS MAGIC (7) J Bridger 58 3... G. Berdwell 2 6 50040 SANDBLASTER (19) (D) W Turner 58 O.R. C-Boutcher (7) 9 B

— 10 georgroup

Minimum weight: 7st 10th. True weights: Ripentoter 7st 8th, Searm 7st 7th.
BETTING: 7-4 (IC Chi Sega, 11-4 Avensan, 11-2 Fency Design, Tyrolean
Dancer, 7-1 Crosoft Patrick, 12-1 Rivers Magic, 25-1 Others 4.25 Call The Boss 4.55 Italian Symphony 2.20 OSPREY HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m GOING: Slow. STALLS: Inside, except Si & 1m (outside).

A McCarthy (5) 4

- 6 declared 
Manimum weight 7st 10th True handicap weight Aquavita, 7-1 Tude Can Tell,
Palisander, 25-1 Colertoge

2.55 MERLIN SELLING HANDICAP (CLASS F) (DIV II) £3,000 added 1m 1 523-4; WITHOUT FRIENDS (7) (CD) J Pitch Heyes 4.9 10... R Franch 5 0-3050 ALLINSON'S MATE (12) (CD) f D Barron 10.9 7

over a distance of ground at ba (3.40), who fell in the early es he has to come out." 9 declared -9 ETTING: 5-2 Cheerful Groom, 7-2 Invocation, 4-1 Without Friends, Altinoon's Mate, 7-1 Rocky Waters, 10-1 Great Chief, 14-1 others

3.25 FAUCETS SPEEDY CLASSIC HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,750 added 6f 

Minimum weight; 7st 10th. True handicap weight: Heavenly Abstone 7st 8th. BETTING: 5-2 Witchlinder, 5-1 Robo Magic, 11-2 Shaletayholy, 6-1 Apol-io Red, 8-1 Speedy Classic, Scissor Ridge, 10-1 others

3.55 BUZZARD HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3YO 5f | 002-6 VISTA ALEGRE (17) (C) (SF) P Malon 9 7 . D Griffiths (5) 3 501-11 TANGERINE FLYER (26) (CD) J Berry 9 5 ... ... P Roberts (3) 5 2554 VOUNG IBNR (260) (D) P Scare 9 3 ... ... A McCarthy (5) 2 2521 RED PSPPE (1) (C) P Howing 8 0 ... ... J Quian 4 263-24 MISS BANANAS (8) 7 68 7 10 ... ... N Cardstr (7 - 5 declared ~ Minimum weight: 7st 10fb. True handicsp weight: Miss Banenes 7st 9b. BETTING: 10-11 Tangarine Flyer, 3-1 Vista Alegre, 4-1 Red Peppie; 10-1 Miss Bananes. 20-1 Young Tonr

4.25 BARN OWL MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 1m S GRAND OVATION (273) D Cospore 49 '2...

4334 MANRKATO (9) D Cospore 49 '2...

4335 SEVERITY (211) W Haggas 49 '2...

CALL THE BOSS J Naseds 3 8 7...

CEAD MILE FAILTE R Ingran 3 B 7...

OS MISTER TRICKY (85) P Michel 3 B 7...

COS- CAPTIVATING (186) R Hamon 3 B 2...

7 declared 4...

- 7 declared -BETTING: 8-11 Call The Boss, 9-2 Severity, 5-1 Captivating, 10-1 Manika to, 14-1 Grand Overion, 25-1 Master Titcky, 33-1 Coad Mile Fulls 4.55 HARRIER LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) 23,000 added 7f

08-211 TTALIAN SYMPHONY (7) (CD) P Evens 4 9 12. 1 D8-211 TALLAM SYMPHONY (7) (CD) P Evens 4 9 12
2 -2231 ROBBELLION (11) (C) Mrs L Subbs 7 9 10 Dane O'Neill 9
3 -00148 BLUE FLYER (7) (CD) R Ingren 5 9 8 A McClarin; (5) 6 V
2 -2235 CASTE ASHEY JAKOK (7) (CD) P Howing 4 9 8 S Withsonth 2
5 -1220 THEATTE MAGIC (3) (D) D State 5 9 8 A McClarin; (3) (C) 00-30 PHILISTAR (17) (C) K Barke 5 9 8 D Services; (3) 6
6 000-30 PHILISTAR (17) (C) K Barke 5 9 8 D Services; (3) 6
7 052-6 PALO BLANCO (10) G L Moore 7 9 5 Candy Mortis 6
8 00400 SERGEANT MRP (12) P Midchell 3 8 3 M Homy 7
9 D44-M SCOTLAND BN (26) (CD BY R Horton 3 8 2 P Resistance (7) 1
8 ETTING: 3-1 Italiam Symphony, 5-7 Roballion, 6-1 Philipsay, Scotland Bny, 7-1 Theatre Magic, Palo Blanco, 8-1 Blue Flyer, 12-1 others

### Forster has Mandate to take National trial

The former National Hunt jockey Steve Smith Eccles (right) gives a runner-by-runner analysis of today's John Hughes Grand National Trial.



Tennessee Twist: Good win- He is sure to be staying on ner of a novice chase on this at the end if the going is soft track last year and loves soft enough for him, but may ground. There must be a question mark against his fitness first time out, and over Idiot's Lady: Would have to

River Mandate: Winner at Wetherby last time, beating the in-form Strath Royal. If the ground is on the soft side Orswell Lad: A tricky char-

he would have a definite chance. Ottowa: A lucky winner of the National trial at Uttox-

eter when the clear leader Kamikaze unscated his ridor two fences from home. big race and connections expect him to improve for it.

St Mellion Fairway: Could figure in the places if there is enough give in the ground.

Destin D'Estruval: Held on form by River Mandate. Loves heavy ground, though, and normally jumps well.

Dom Samourai: Game as a

just lack finishing speed.

improve to reach the frame.

Parsons Boy: Pulled up last time and needs to do better.

actor who is not an easy ride, but has been running well lately.

General Pongo: Cannot win on all known form.

Thermal Warrior: In great Nevertheless, Ottowa ran a form this season but is out of the handicap.

Conclusion: RIVER MAN-DATE is the form horse in the race after ending Strath Royal's winning streak at Wetherby. His trainer, Captain Forster, does really well with these big, old fashioned chasing types. Ottowa has to be thereabouts after winning the National Trial at Utpebble and loves this course. toxeter.

### Windsor

HYPERION 2.25 Polar Lord 3.00 John Drumm 3.30 Shadiann 4.00 Symbol Of Success 4.30 Trail Boss 5.00 No Pattern

GOING: Good to Firm (Firm in places).

Figure of eight course Level, with sharp turns, and long straights.

Gourse is N of lown on ASIG hear junction 6 of M4. Stations at Windsor Central and Windsor Riverside ADMISSION: Cub St. (Tatersalls Sti); Siver Ring R4. CAR PARIC Cub S2: rest S1.

BLEADING THAINERS: K Balley 5-57 (283%). Miss H Knight 10-59 (165%). N Handerson 9-46 (195%). T Forster 6-21 (285%). B LEADING JOCKEYS: N A Fitzgerald S1-63 (206%). D Gallegher 7-51 (327%). N Williamson 6-60 (10%). J R Kavanagh 5-34 (14.7%).

FAVOURITES: 80-256 (35.2%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None. GOING: Good to Firm (Firm in places).

2.25 KING JOHN NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,750 added 2m 6f 110yds

7233 NOR'S FLITTER (21) CDI) D Essorin 9 11 2 Mr S Durack (6) 62500 CHABROL (F19) John Serry 5 17 6 ... ... ... JR Kavanagh 033F1 MOONLIGHT ARP (26) (C) J Spearing 7 11 1... E Hosbert (3) 000 BROUGHTON SLAZE (11) W Musson 7 17 0 ... ... ... P Hosey 50/4 DENINYS GOLD (10) R Curits 8 11 0 ... ... J Leach 35-4 LITTLE CRUMPLIN (97) O Sharmood 6 if 0 ... J.A McCarthy 

5 0-60 (ERSHA (68) N Babbago 5 10 9. G Hogam (3) 15 003-P4 LUCRATIVE PERK (53) MEss C Caroe 6 10 9 ... C Webb (5) - 16 declared -9ETTING: 7-4 hror's Fluther, 6-1 Be My Mot, 8-1 Moonlight Alt, Polar Lord, 10-1 Chabrol, Little Crumplin, 14-1 Broughton Elizze, 16-1 others

3.00 MAGNA CARTA NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m 5f 4-274 JOHN BRUMM (7) F R Webber 7 H 10 ... S Michael 32-24 JOHN BRUMM (7) F R Webber 7 H 10 ... S Michael 32-23 JOHN BRUMM (7) F R Webber 7 H 10 ... S Michael 53 JOHN WORD (2) D Williams 6 H 3 ... If Kentragin (7) 20-25 SPEEVINL PRINCE (10) M Restrocks 8 H 3 ... Goldstein (7) 00-F STARDANTE (70) R Las 6 H 3 ... M Griffits (7) 6 declared ... M Griffits (7)

### BETTING: 4-5 John Oraman, 4-1 Speedwell Prince, 13-2 Trouvable, 8-1 One Word, Ratters, 25-1 Standante

3.30 HATCH BRIDGE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 4YO 2m 

4.00 DAVID ZEFFMAN 40TH BIRTHDAY H'CAP CHASE (CLASS D) 25,000 3m 

4.30 STAINES HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m 5f

Minimum weight: 10st. True Fandiscy weight: At It Again 8st 120: BETTING: 5-4 Carlingtord Gale, 9-4 Trail Boss, 9-2 Man Nood, 5-1 Count Master, 12-1 Another Course, 25-1 At It Again 5.00 RUNNYMEDE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,750 added 2m

11995 DAMESOLD (10) (CD) M Charmon 6 20 ... D Byrne 21224 RANGTIKS (70) ED C Morn 7 11 2 ... Mr K R O'Ryan (7) 6256 KHALID (9) (0) D Gardich 9 11 6 ... Sophie Mitchal (3) 2-39 BLUFFED (22) M Tomplone 5 11 5 ... R Thermion 0584 STATAJACK (23) (0) D Elbyrch C 11 0 ... P Holley 34520 GORE FOR A BURTON (21) P Makin 8 11 0 ... J R Kennight 

### Wolverhampton HYPERION

7.00 Silken Dalliance 7.30 Ethbaat 8.00 Shontaine 8.30 Head Gardener 9.00 Bongo 9.30 Rajah

GOING: Standard. STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 61 to 1m 4t. UNANY MARKATANA FROM MAIN OUTS.

Fibresand surface; foll-hand course.

Course to SE of lown on B2028. Sealon actions course. ADMISSION: CAID ES; Tattersalis 25 (QAP Demond Culo 24); Restaurant SION: Cub ES; Ethersals SS (OAP Demond Cub OR; Restaurant 25:50 including enteriors and meet CAR PARK: Free.

LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinghead 53-814 (103%), M Johnston 58-253 (221%), P Hastem 38-207 (164%), M Prescott 28-116 (241%), Charling JOCKEYS: 9 Senders 40-305 (113%), D Holland 26-356 (113%), Dean McKaown 28-248 (105%), J Chain 25-402 (82%), FAYOURITES: 394 years from 1219 races (175%), BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Technician (7:30).

7.00 DUCK MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,000 added 3YO 6f GRANTS BLIE (28) F Exchs 8 0 L Chemics 5
GC CROTTERS EDGE (166) A Lorks 9 0 L Chemics 2
GC CROTTERS EDGE (166) A Lorks 9 0 L Chemics 2
SINCY C Thomas 9 0 Dean McKeown 4
INVERCORDON J Existes 9 0 Dean McKeown 4
INVERCORDON J Existes 9 0 Sanders 1
G3 HEVER GOLF PASSION (117) 7 J Naudition 8 9
G3 FARMES (8) (8) S M Prescott 8 9 Sanders 1
G3 HEVER GOLF PASSION (117) 7 J Naudition 8 9
G3 SINCEN DALLANCE (113) P Malen 8 9 V Hallidgy 2
G3 SINCEN DALLANCE (115) Lord Huttrigdon 8 9 K Fatton 3
9 declared

- 9 declared -BETTING: 7-4 Silten Dallanca, 5-2 Never Golf Passion, 3-1 Foorlass, 10-1 L'Estable Fleurie, 12-1 Envoy, 20-1 Invergorden, 33-1 others 7.30 COW CLAIMING LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 added 1m 100yds 

## 8.00 LADBROKE FREEPHONE HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 1m 100yds

8.30 SHEEP HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,000 added 2m 46yds

9.00 GOOSE SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £2,500 added 1m 1f 79yds

- 9 declared -BETTING: 7-4 Bongo, 5-2 Loch Style, 6-1 Hollowly Melochy, 8-1 Xemopho Of Curanza, Janara, 12-1 Blue Hoppin, 16-1 My Legal Eagle, 20-1 others 9.30 HEN HANDICAP (CLASS E) 53,500

added 1m 4f 00-114 STATE APPROVAL (15) (CD) (BF) Mess S Wilton 5 10 0 . 2 304-62 SUGA HAWK (10) (C) (D) E Asion 6 9 8. McCarthy (5) 6
3 04-60 COBLE (HD) D McCarth 4 6 12. P Petracy (3) 1
-5n6 NORTH ARDAH (4) (D BF) N Latinodes 8 8 0 5 Whitworth 4 5 60-61 RAJAN (20) (C) (D) C Thorriton 5 8 9 . Dean McCarth 4 6 60-62 PALACEGATE JO (5) (CD) D Chapmon 7 7 10 . L Charmock 2 -6 declared 
Marimum weight 7 st 10/6. True franking weight Palacegate Jo 7st 10-8 ETTING: 6-4 Suga Hewk, 3-1 North Arctar, 7-2 Rejets, 9-2 State Approval, 20-1 Palacegate Jo, 33-1 Coble

المكذا من الأصل

### Chepstow HYPERION 1.15 Muskhill 1.45 Splendid Thyne 3.15 Golden Eagle 3.45 Escartefigue 2.15 Ottowa 2.45 WITH IMPUNITY (nap) 4.15 Good Lord Murphy

2.45 WITH IMPUNITY (nap)

GOING: Good to Soft (Good in places).

Left-hand, undulating course with stiff tences.

Course is on A486. Chepstow station (Cardiff - Gloucestar line) im. ADMISSION: Cub.

Ext. Tatersals S10 (CAPE S3). CAR PARK: Free

LEADING TRANSCRS: M Pipe 44 withers from 191 numers (23%). P Hobbs 27-84 (262%).

N Twiston-Davies 20-tri (19%). P Nicholis 18-79 (228%).

LEADING JÜCKEYS: A P McCoy 32 withers from 113 rides (263%). C Liewellyn 1686 (162%). A Maguire 13-54 (241%). R Johnson 12-58 (203%).

FAVOURITES: 156 with in 382 races (408%).

SLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

1.15 PERSIAN WAR PREMIER NOVICE HURDLE (Grade 2) (CLASS A) £15,000 added 2m 4f 110 yels

Beerfroom Shuffle 6 Ti 6 P Hide 6-4 las u Griffort) 8 ran
FORM GUIDE

David Nicholson fields two useful novoes, but King On The Run may need more of a stog than this – unless the ground proves to be on the "dead" side. He will make a cracking chaser. MUSICHILL runs here after bypessing Huntingdon (ground too field) and his burning from was such that he stands to make a classy jumper. There were some plus and minus points concerning his hundes debut win at Accot (2m 4). He made a few mistakes and Skycab looked a non steyer and the upgraded Take Cover was conceding weight. On the other hand, he beat them a country mile and also had five tengths in hand of Aridey Royal, who has since won a 23-numer event at Warwick in good style. No doubt beat. Kings Massaure looks a fine prospect and further improvement is likely following his Haydock defeat of Martin Pipes Tamanndo (2m 4); 28 days back. He only defeat so far came in a hot bumper here in December when a close-up fourth to Jet Bobs and Musikhill. The Run on 2m 5f Kempton form a month ago. Before that, he had nur third to French Holly in the Toworth Hundle at Sandown and that form is working out extra well. Borache favourite Zastrabed at Kempton) before breaking his duck when stepped up in trip in ordinary company at Lingfield.

Selection: MUSICHILL.

1.45 M & N GROUP LIMITED HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 2m 4f 110yds 1 01-30 POTENTATE (USA) (77) (CD) (Jim Wiseden) M Pipe 7 11 12 A P McCoy yellow, and inverted biorgle and analess 2 3-6m SPLENDIO THYNE (SS) (D) (John Gahanan) T Casey 6 11 4 M Williamson white, not stripe white, not stripe 1 22-21 CHEERFUL ASPECT (11) (D) (Loby Pikington) T Forster 5 11 1 M Williamson end, green striped elevers, black and and quartered cap 4 /2mm ROYALE ANGELA (FR) (14) (D) (J) Noville 3 Noville 6 10 6 M Maguire black and orange stripes, prange stelevis, black amiles, prange cap 4 declared - 4 declared - 4 declared - 8ETTIMG: 7-4 Splendid Thyras, 9-4 Cheerful Aspect, 11-4 Potentate, 5-1 Royale Angele 1937: Brove Tomedo 6 10 12 8 Fortion 8-1 (G Batchig) 12 ran FORIM GUIDDE Cut understool is problebly important for SPLENDIO THYNE, who has a strong change

Cut underfoot is probably important for SPLENDED THYNE, who has a strong chance if conditions remain suitable. He completed a het-trick when taking a decent handicap at Warwick and a 3b rise in the weights does not book enough to halt his progress. He had been a convincing winner from Campaign at Haydock previously and Micky Hammonds gelding declines a remotch. Cheerful Aspect mode at and pulled deer in an eightnamer handicap at Warwick 11 days ago after a Leicaster second to course specialist Beechfield Flyer, who was conceding a stone. Cheerful Aspect may have to give up the front-nunling role to Potentiath, who seems to love this course and has gained five wirs, plus one third, from six previous visits. His st. 4b higher than when besten just over two lengths by Marello here in November and, still a fresh horse, is bound to make a bold bid. Royale Angelai (a getding) is an improved mudlark.

2.15 JOHN HUGHES GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL HTCAP CHASE (CLASS B) 520,000 3m 2f 110yds BBC1 District of the Control of the Contr 

nd, while cross belts, rojal bite steenes
— It declared —
Minimum enight: 10st. True handicap weights: General Purgo 9st 11th, Thantel Werrior 8st 13th.
BETTING: 4-1 Ottowa, 5-1 Dom Samoural, 6-1 River Mandata, 13-2 Coul

red, white cross beits, royal blue sleeves

Form GUBE

Ottown runs this course well and is from a stable which can do little wrong at present, but deeper ground would have helped him. Ottows had littled: Lady had eight and a half lengths behind when wiming at Utroster last time and Jenny Pitmen's mare needs to perk up to reverse the form. She continuely jumped right when second to Class of Ninstytwo at Warnvick last season and has been lightly raced since. Stablemate Tennessee Twist is tumbered with top weight on his reappearance and ground conditions may not be testing enough for the attractively-weighted St Mellion Felinway. So DOM SAMIL-RAI, freshened up by a 42-day break, can maintain this season's improvement, He did well in running fourth to Him Of Praise at Sandown considering that race came only two weeks offer his second to Earth Summit in the Coral Wetsh National hare. River Mandate (holds Deathn D'Estruvail) is no foriorn hope, but had only 10st and tour opponents when winning over@m at Wetherby last month.

Selection: DOM SAMILRAI

ľ	2.45 TONY PRESTON FLEDGLING INTERMEDIATE CHASE (CLASS B) \$10,500 added 2m 3f 110yds
,	1 SSZ22 BRANDLEBERRY (57) (D) (Hamper Racing) Mrs S Snith 9 tl 3 R Williamson 2 23-31 SUPER COIN (28) (D) (George Boolee) R Lee 10 tl 3 N Williamson
	2 2538 Sures con and to reach Broken have a Table of the
	4 23/05 AHURO THE GALE (36) (D) (1 ) WHIRPY D CREATE THE AP MCCOY
•	7 ISUSO FRYS NO POOL (35) (Five No Fool Partnersho) J Old 8 ti Q
8	-7 decimed -

DETTING: 7-4 Ack The Busier, 7-2 With Inspendry, 4-1 Super Coin, 7-1 Bell Staffbey, 12-1 Frys No Fool, Amund The Gale, 14-1 Brambleberry 1997 Air Shot 7 ti 0 R Johnson 5-2 (D Nicholson) 5 ran

3.15 EBF 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICE HURDLE (QUALIFIER) (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 110yds 2-821 DNES (23) (D) (T Cheptel T Cury D Noncisial Beckwell) P Notchis 6 11 10 ... T.J Marphy
-632 GATFLAX (21) (D) (Gies Cariss) N Investor-Dances 8 11 10 ... W Mariston
-633 GATFLAX (21) (D) (Gies Cariss) N Investor-Dances 8 11 10 ... W Williamston
-630 (GO DEBENT (59) (D) (P) No PW Wild R Alves 6 11 5 ... N Williamston
-630 (GNG OF THIEVES (22) (D) (J D) 866 (C Marrs 6 11 5 ... N Williamston
-630 (GNG OF THIEVES (22) (D) (J D) 866 (C Marrs 6 11 5 ... N Williamston
-630 (GNG OF THIEVES (22) (D) (J D) 866 (C Marrs 6 11 5 ... N Williamston
-630 (GNG OF THIEVES (23) (D) (Coriston N Investor) A Turnel 5 11 0 ... C Rea (7)
-630 (GNG OF THIEVES (23) (D) (Coriston N Investor) A Turnel 5 11 0 ... N Frament
-632-68 MASTER PLGHIM (42) (J M Krimsch) G Batcing 6 11 0 ... N Frament
-639 (GNG OF THIEVES (24) (D) D M Brock) P Cariston 5 11 0 ... S Brorrough
-640 (GNG OF THIEVES (24) (D) D M Brock) P Cariston 6 11 0 ... A P Nethodol
-659 (GNG OF THIEVES (24) (D) D M Brock) P Cariston 6 11 0 ... A P Nethodol
-659 (GROUPS (C)) (GRoorge Bookes) R Lee 6 11 0 ... A P Nethodol
-659 (GROUPS (C)) (G Groups Bookes) R Lee 6 11 0 ... A P Nethodol
-659 (GROUPS (C)) (C Groups Bookes) R Lee 6 11 0 ... A Nethodol
-659 (GROUPS (C)) (C Groups Bookes) R Lee 6 11 0 ... A Nethodol
-659 (GROUPS (C)) (C F Capie) A Newcombe 5 10 9 ... H Othere (7)
-650 (GROUPS (C)) (C F Capie) A Newcombe 5 10 9 ... L Capamins (5)
-16 deschared -

- 16 dictared -BETTING: 15-8 Gattler, 7-2 Golden Engle, 11-2 Dices, 8-1 Lord Regal, 10-1 Go Cahoota, 12-1 Klog Di Thileres, Waynizes, 14-1 Repeat Office, Master Rights, 18-1 Go Go Heary, 20-1 others 937 Princatus 6 11 0 R Farrant 7-2 (Mrs J Ptiman) 11 ran

3.45 ASPIRING CHAMPIONS NOVICE CHASE (CLASS B) £10,500 added 3m 

- 8 deciared -BETTING: 11-10 Escartofigue, 15-8 Fiddling The Facts, 5-1 Strong Chairman, 14-1 Spring Double 25-1 Dark Stranger, 40-1 others 1997: Cyborgo 7 12 0 R Durwoody 4-7 far (M Pipe) 14 ran

4.15 FLYOVER HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) £6,000 added 

## **Punters' Guide**

CHEPSTOW

L15: MUSKHUL has the potential to be a top contender for the Royal Sun Alliance Hurdle at Cheltenham next month. After a successful bemper career, he overcame a lastflight blunder to win on his hurdles debut at Ascot. Calon Lan is considered to have a bright future and will be staying on strongly.

L45: Royale Angela seeks a fivetimer here and cannot be ruled out after gamely bolding off all challengers in a decent event at Ut-toxeter last time. SPLENDID THYNE, though, is classier and Invice, though, is classed and looks capable of giving 12lb to the locally trained bottom weight.

2.15: A fit Tennessee Twist could defy the burden of top weight here but an absence of over a year raises doubts. Orswell Lad has previously had problems staying this trip on this demanding track. Dom Samourai, in contrast, is likely to be staying on best of all. OT-TOWA has the best credentials however. When winning at Uttoxeter a fortnight ago he had leading Grand National candidate Him Of Praise back in third.

NEWCASTLE

2.30: Addington Boy and SPARKY GAYLE are refugees from chasing. but while the former is using this as a prep for the Cheltenham Gold Cup, the selection, who acts on this ground, is attempting to re-establish his reputation. 

3.05: INDIAN ARROW, who was much improved for trying a longer trip last time, can follow up at the expense of Samice. 

4.05: POLITICAL TOWER is consistent and quite capable of coping with lively ground. Blue Charm is improving and looks the danger.

Shortest-priced winner: Seven Towers 2-1 (1997) Longest-priced wirmer: Davids Duky 16-1 (1992)

Top Jockey: P Niven - Willsford (1995) & Seven Towers (1997)

Winning ages:

First show

nessee Twist is 14-1 with Coral

- William Hill offer just 9-1 -

while Idiots Lady is 10-1 with

the Tote - Coral and Lad-

brokes conservatively go just

Chepstow - 1.15

н

Kinga Necessa 7-2 4-1 10-3

Bracey Russ 14-1 14-1 14-1 Red Curate 14-1 14-1 20-1

Scoring Pedigree 14-1 14-1 20-1

Strong Tel 18-1 20-1 25-1

Wheelery's Land 50-1 38-1 66-1 Each-way a fifth the odds, places, 1, 2, 3

94 52 74

5-1 9-2 4-1

8-1 8-1 11-1

33-1 25-1 25-1

Eider Chase - 10-year-tale

Starting prices: 5-2 11-2 13-2 A 16-1 3-1 A 4-1 9-1 2-1

Winner's place in betting: 1 3 0 A 0 1 A 2

Profit or loss to £1 stake: Favourites +£250. Second Favourites -£300. Parcentage of winners placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in lest race: 88%

Top trainet: No trainer has won this race more than once in the past 10 years

1988 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 1 4 3 A 7 1 A F

8 8 8 A 10 9 A 12 10 8

10.7 <u>9.71 10.0 A 9.7 10.0 A 10.6 9.71 178</u>

Ottown

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

WARWICK

3.16: WINN'S PRIDE was 44 lengths behind the winner when ninth of 12 runners at Uttoxeter a formight ago - hardly encouraging form. But the ground was testing then compared to the fast surface forecast today. Reg Hollinshead's Flat runners have hit form of late. Village King has form in the mud but his trainer says this five-yearold acts even better on firm ground and he is the danger.

3.40: A scorching gallop is certain with Lake Kariba and Queen Of Spades in the field. Both have proved capable of finding more at the finish, but they could play into the hands of ASHWELL BOY. Richard Dunwoody is likely to be stalking the pace-setters throughout. His mount was a creditable third last time to leading novices Champleve and Classy Lad.

4.10: David Nicholson runs Samuel Wilderspin. This six-year-old caught Skillwise to win at Cheltenham three weeks ago, but Skillwise's subsequent poor run at Wincanton failed to frank the form SONG OF THE SWORD is consistent and looks superior.

4.48: On his latest run 12-year-old Dublin Flyer his back at claims that he is on the downgrade by putting up his best display so far this sea-son with a third to Papillon at Cheltenham. He has been dropped 71b since, and the younger SENOR EL BETRUITI, up 8lb since his last rup in a handicap, will need to be on his mettle.

A = Abandoned

CHLI

92 92 92 51

Chepstow - 2.15

Hver Mandate 4-1 9-2 9-2 9-2

St Medion February 13-2 13-2 8-1 11-2

Destin D'Estruvai 13-2 13-2 7-1 13-2

Idiots Lady 7-1 9-1 7-1 10-1 General Pongo 12-1 12-1 11-1 10-1

Osswell Lad 10-1 12-1 10-1 11-1

Tennessee Tetat 14-1 9-1 12-1 10-1

Personna Boy 20-1 25-1 25-1 25-1

Each way a quarter the odds, places, 1, 2, 3

Newcastle - 3.05

Linden's Lotto 10-3 7-2 7-2 10-3

Documents De Pron. 5-1 5-1 4-1 4-1

Indian Arrow 7-2 41 9-2 4-1

Stormtracker 6-1 5-1 5-1 17-2

Over The Deel 16-1 16-1 18-1 20-1

Scotton Banks 15-1 15-1 20-1 20-1 20-1 25-1 20-1 25-1

Each-way a Rith the odds, places, 1, 2, 3

C - Coral, H - William Hill, L - Ladbrokes, T - Tota

B2 B2 92 5-1

14-1 14-1 18-1 18-1 16-1 14-1 16-1 20-1

33-1 33-1 22-1 33-1

### Newcastle

~ = :-:

1.30 Second Fiddle 2.00 Dr Bones 2.30 Sparky Gayle 3.05 Indian Arrow

HYPERION 3.35 Legal Right 4.05 Political Tower 4.35 Jumbo Star

GOING: Good GOING: Good.

Left-frand, oval course; tough, galloping track.

Course is on A1, 5m north of town. Metro service to Four Lane Ends station from Newcastle rail station. Bus service from there. ADMISSION: Club E15; Tatteraals E10; Silver Ring E4 62 less in each enclosure for CAPs and registered deabled; CAR PARK: Free.

LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveloy 43-772 (27%), G Richards 15-77 (211%), J H Johnson 15-117 (111%), J Jefferson 11-42 (262%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: P Niven 42-140 (30%), A Dobbin 17-133 (128%), B Storey 16-142 (113%), R Garring 15-00 (144%).

(11.3%), R Garriery 13-90 (14.4%).

FAVOURITES: 158 was from 355 races (44.5%).

	==	JAKER.	EU FIRST TIME: Canadian Fantesy (visored, 3.35).	
	Ŀ	1.30	ADVENT RACECOURSE CATERING NOVIC (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 4f	E HURD!
	1	QP.	BARTON GREEN (NZ) (88) (Stanley W Clarke) S Provistraw 7 tl 4	C New
	12	ᄣ	BMILE SUSPENCE (29) (A & K Lingerie) A Faheu 5 11 4	I We
	3	20104	CAPILING-UND TYKE (75) (Jostico Recno) T Carr 6 tl 4	N Sma
	4	U	CAPINAYEN (16) (Mrs R Brewis) Miss R Brewis 6 tf 4	C McConnack i
	5	000	CHAIN LINE (320) (J W F Avnslev) J Avnslev 8 11 4	Mr C Bonner
	ε	56	PEPPER POT BOY (29) (A.J. MacDonald) Mrs M Reveley 6 til 4	P Niv
	7	44-200	ROMAN OUTLAW (12) (Mrs K Walton) M Hammond 6 ft 4	D Bentl
	5		SCOTMAIL BOY (Gordon Brown/Bert Watson) J Howard Johnson 5 11 4.	
	9		THEGSFT (G F Bear) J Howard Johnson 5 11 4	P Carber
	10	8-654	WHAT A TALE (12) (Jerum Partnershap) Mrs M. Reveley 6 tl 4	G L
i	Ħ	0-PP	ALLFORUS (29) (The Kelso Connection) Mrs D Thomson 6 to 13	R McGrath
ı	12	420-	DISTANT HILLS (497) (A Nesbitt) J Dodds 6 to 13	
	13	42029.	EVE'S TREASURE (812) (S W Campon) S Campion 8 to 13	P Michilay
	14	4 <b>F</b>	KERRISDALE (11) (Brandsby Racing) P Beaumont 6 to 13	
	5	0000-0	MEGGIE SCOTT (18) (Mrs Elle Scullon) J Dodds 5 10 13	D Pari
	16	32PP43	SECOND FEDDLE (11) (O Brennan) O Brennen 8 to 13	M. Brenn
i	17	00	TIRINITY (18) (Mrs   A Fonest) B Mactagoart 6 10 13	
ł	13	4	KRIS GREEN (7) (P M Cain) L Lungo 4 10 7	R Suce
ı			Control of the contro	

19 4 SEREMADE (16) (P Spottissrood) P Spottissrood 4 10 7 .... - 19 declared BETTING: 2-1 Papper Pot Boy, 5-2 What A Tale, 6-1 Second Fiddle, 8-1 Roman Outlant, 10-1 Kris
Green, 12-1 Cartingford Tyke, 14-1 Scotmal Boy, 19-1 Barton Green, 20-1 Brief Suspence, Kerdecha Transport 25-1 Extent Transport Declared 10-1 Second 10-1 Sec

	risdiate, Thegrift, 25-1 Eve's Treenure, Distort Hills, 33-1 others 1997: Bobby Grant 6 11 to P Niven 3-1 fav (C Grant) 19 ran
	2.00 FAIRYHOUSE RACECOURSE NOVICE CHASE (CLASS C
	1 -F127 PRINCE OF SAINTS (29) (D) (BF) (Lice Buzzeo) M Herrmond 7 ft 13R Gentity 2 +E201 FORESTAL (29) (D) (Bity Maguire) J Howard Johnson 6 ft 9A Dobble
	3 .115(1) DR BONES (7) (D) (Mrs Arm Fortune) F Murphy 5 11 4
į	- 5 declared - BETTING: 5-5 Forestal, 7-4 Doctor Bonne, 4-1 Prince Of Spirits, 25-1 Our Main Men 40-1 Little Tusko SIZZ Conf Minster A 11 3 R Germin, 11-10 by MH Hammond 5 ran

2.30 BOB GORMAN SIGNS HANDICAP HURDLE SKY 3-612 STAR RAGE (70) (C) (BF) (J David Abell) M Johnston 8 12 0. 

**HYPERION** 

4.10 Song Of The Sword

4.40 Senor El Betrutti

5.10 Chief Red Nose

Warwick

2.35 High in The Clouds

3,40 Ashwell Boy (nb)

2.05 Bitofamixup

3.10 Winn's Pride

while, and Cross of Loraine, black and while shiped sleeves, and cap

- 8 declared 
- 8 decl

_				
•	3	.05	TOTE EIDER HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £35.000 added 4m 1f	SKY
3			2.55,000 aoded 4m it	
)	1	4348-P	SCOTTON BANKS (14) (I Bray) T Easterby 9 12 0	L Wys
}			fight blue, red Cross of Longine and cao	•
	2	-35113	SAMILEE (56) (White Lion Partnership) P Hootes 9 to 11	P Never
,			dark blue, yellow stars, red sleaves	
1	3	-21114	LINDEN'S LOTTO (21) (C) (Crocketts Club) G Richards 9 to 7	
1			mercon, grey elseves, pml, cap	
3	4	2442	STORMTRACKER (71) (BF) (Tim Davis) C Weedon 9 to 7	_M Richards
}			dark blue, amerald green cross belts, white sleeves and cap	
}	5	4-2124	CELIDH BOY (7) (C) (SEF) (Mrs J D Goodfallow) Mrs J Goodfallow 12 10 1	B Storey
}	_		black, like and black hooped cap	
)	6	-U54P5	KILLESHIN (30) (CO) (H J Marners) H Marners 12 10 0	S Силап
r	-		dark blue, red cap, green spots.	
1	7	14-4F1	MONAN ARROW (NZ) (37) (Joe & Josene Richards) M Pipe 10 10 0	C Maxie
•			clark green and white disbolo, white sleeves and cop	
•	а	3/F-1P	OVER THE DEEL (35) (C) (George Tobit) J Howard Johnson 12 to 0 Mr	C Bonner (3)
1	-	<b>4</b>	-light blue, pink sleeves, check cap	(o)
	9	U36-25	KELCOLGAN (21) (J D Goodfellow) Mrs J Goodfellow 11 10 0	P Carberry
8	-		black, pink sleeves, black cap, pink ster	
_	10	3-1PM	DOMAINE DE PRON (FR) (21) (Mrs L C Taylor) Mrs L Taylor 7 to 0	R Supple
	-	•	dark preen, white seems, dark green showes, white cap, red star	
	ъ	FIIIJ-2	CHOISTY (34) (G A Swinbenk) H Haynes B 100	A MicGrath (5)
			when, chocolean spots, pirk cap.	101
			- 11 declared -	

Minimum weight: 10st. True hendrap weights: Killstin Bet 13lb, Indian Arrow 9st 12lb, Over The Deel 9st 9lb, Kilcolgen 9st 7lb, Domane De Pron & Choisty 8st 6lb. BETTING: 100-30 Linden's Lotto, 4-1 Sensiee, 9-2 Indian Arrow, 11-2 Domaine De Pron, 6-1 Stonstracker,

9st 8b., Kilcoigen 9st 7b. Domaine De Print & Choisty 8st 8b.
BETTINC: 100-30 Linderts Lotto, 41 Sasiles, 9-3 Indiae Arrow, 11-2 Domaine De Print, 6-1 Stombacker,
12-1 (Blashin, 14-1 Celdick) 8c; 16-1 Over The Deel, 20-1 Sociation Banks, 25-1 Kilcoigen, 33-1 Choisty
1997: Seven Towers 8 17 8 P Niver 2-1 fav (lints M Revelley) 12 ran
FORM GUIDE
LINDEN'S LOTTO was soon left behind once Morrasie Forte and others quactaned up
turning for home at Ayr (2m 4f) times weeks ago but as he'd been tackling staying trips
beforehend he was probably prepared to go round again. Linderts Lotto looked better
than ever when he defield 11st 13b over 3m6f here in January, so perhaps he can improve further now he's up in distance again. Linderts Lotto will have to stay every yard
with Samilee in opposition. A winner over the National stances at Anthree (5m 3f) in Noverniber, Semilee was a staying-on third behind Earth Survmit in the Welsh National at Chepstow (heavy) last time, so he has the stamina and the quelity to play a leading role. Samilee
is effective on this tester ground, but it could be a bit too lively for the Welsh National
tourth, Killeshin, winner of this race in 1998 and third to Seven Towers 12 months ago.
In contrast, Stommiracker and Domaine De Pron are very much at home on good or
resiste ground Pulled up in last year's Scottish National won by Belmont King, Stormfracker
does have a but to prove when it comes to staying this trip, whereas Domaine De Pron
has proved his Ring for a staying trip, and that could easily oftest the fact that he's
out of the hendicap, Indian Arrow takes a big step up in distance but he won in good
style when asked to tackle three miles-plus at Wincenton last month so perhaps this stamint test will suit him. A rare runner here for Mertin Pipa, Indian Arrow commences re-

	3	3.35	NORTHUMBRIAN WATER ST OSWALD'S HOSPICE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m
1	1	302/1	HAZARD A GUESS (70) (D) (J M G Promotions Ltd) B Rothwell B 11 9
	3	3	CENSOR MEN (G H Leatharm D Nichols 5 Tt 4
- 1	<b>4</b> 5	4-0	HIGH HOPE HENRY (USA) (29) (M H O G Reong 2) M Hammond 5 11 4
	6	000	JUST JAICE (31) (Mrs M Barker) J Jefferson 5 11 4
É	í	00	NEWBRIDGE BOY (62) (Alen Oraner) M Meacher 5 1) 4
	9		OOH AH CANTONA (1986) (Mrs Ere Secentrari) M Hammond 7 71 4
1	ī	8	SETTING SUN HAR (Mrs. J Wiscontf) N Wagnott 5 11 4M Foster
	2	282-13	STOCK OPTION (J N Anthony) Mrs J Storey 5 11 4
1	4		GELDGRAM SOUND (F638) (Robert Johnson) R Johnson 5 10 73
7	5 6	Ð	BRAVE MAN (NA) (Stephen J Curtist M W Esslerby 4 10 8
	8	0000	CANADIAN FANTASY (22) (Mrs R Key & Mrs V Ward) Mrs V Ward 4 10 8 P Henley (5) V LURPAK LEBEND (12) (MD Foods Pic) Mrs M Reveley 4 10 8
	ġ		PENNYS FROM HEAVEN (P131) (8 KS C Recing) M Hammond 4 10 8
			– 19 declared –

BETTING: 54 Wysyard Kright, 2-1 Legal Right, 6-1 Hezard A Guesa, 6-1 Pennys From Hassen, 10-1 Can-eor, fm Maggy, 20-1 Royal Result, 25-1 Nestoridge Boy, 33-1 Setting Sun, Lurpak Legand, 50-1 others 1997: Marelio 6 11 5 P Niven 1-2 fav (Mrs M Revelay) 19 ron THE CAMAIR FLYER' HAND

l	4.05	(CLASS B) £10,500 added 2m 4f
1		EASY BUCK (28) (D) (J P M & J W Cook) C Morlock 11 12 0
,	1P/6-	gold, aquamarine steeves TARTAN TRADENHINOS (504)(C)(D)(Ashleybank investments) G Richards 11 11 9 A Dobblin
_	117765	baine, brown hoosed slewes, crance can
3	251622	POLITICAL TOWER (16) (C) (3 R S Nbon) R Abon 11 11 4
	_	light blue, red cross belts, black and red hooped sleeves, red cap
4	-5P143	REAL TORIC (12) (CD) (Robert Ogden) G Richerds 8 10 6P Carbony
_		maune and pink chack, white alsevee
b	+1242	BLUE CHARM (18) (D) (Mrs M C Lindsey) Mrs S Bradhume 8 10 1 Mr M Bradhume (5)
		pink and rojel blue (helved), hooped steeres, quartered cap
8	32-F22	SRIGHTER SHADE (12) (CD) (D S Hall) Mrs M Reveloy 8 10 0

TraderInds, 12-1 Easy Buck.

1997: All The Acos 10 10 13 S McNeil 14-1 (J J CNeil) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE

There was just over a length between Brighter Shade and REAL TONIC here 12 days ago, when they were placed behind Ask Me Later, in a three-mile: As he's had just three outings this season and his stable could hardly be in better form, Brighter Shade might.

₩	elght, as	was the case here last time	Selection: REAL TONIC
[	4.35	RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL HURDLE (CLASS F) 52,500 adde	. JOCKEYS HANDICAP d 3m
1	4/3-3P	SILVER STICK (35) (C) (D) (Lord Manton) M W Easterb	y 11 11 13P Midgley
2	4-2443	SILVER STICK (25) (C) (D) (Lord Menton) M W Easterb SCARBA (74) (CD) (Vorteshire Recing Cub Owners Gro.	ip) J Jefferson 10 ff 8_JM Melio (7)
3	535441	MENSHAAR (USA) (7) (D) (Miss S Stumberg) Litungo (	5 11 6
4	005/05	PONDERING (40) (Jim Enns) M Pipe 8 11 5	
5	2-4503	SOUSSE (7) (Wentdale Racing Pertnership) Mrs M Ravel	ley 5 10 10
6	P6P622	WHAT JEE WANTS (11) (Clayton Bigley Partnership Ltd.	J J O'Neal 5 10 6
7	6 <del>-FP4</del> 4	IODER WAN (31) (G M Thomson) Mrs C Hicks 6 108	
6	PP-135	STRATHMORE LODGE (106) (SP) (D Sundin) Ms L Plat	er 9 10 4F Lachy
9	-53P00	SAM CHAMPAGNE (22) (I Brey) T Easterby 6 10 2	N Horrocks
10	6306-4	JUMBO STAR (12) (Mrs E M Dhorn J Dhorn 8 10 2	C NicConnack
11	216/F4	KUTTOCHSIDE LAD (15) (Scotnorth Racing Ltd) Mrs A S	Swindowski 8 10 1
12	253204	CYPRESS AVENUE (31) (XGB Partnership) Mrs V Ward	6 10 OP Henley
13	032/PP	DAVID'S WAY (37) (D.J.Liwer) M Pell 9 10 0	N Hannity (5)

At 1 12 0	MUSKHILL is a top-priced 5-2 with Ladbrokes for the 1.45 at Chepstow – the Tote offer a more cautious 7-4 – while Iranos is 11-1 with the Tote – William Hill and Ladbrokes offer 8-1.  In the 2.15 at Chepstow, Ten-

BETTING: 2-1 Brighter Shade, 9-4 Real Tonic, 9-2 Blue Cheme, 13-2 Political Tower, 10-1 Tertan

well come out on top again, eithough it could be close because both horses are effec- tive over this shorter Journey, What might just help Reel Tonio is not having to carry a big weight, as was the case here last time.
4.35 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) \$2,500 added 3m
4/3-3P SILVER STICK (35) (C) (D) (Lord Marriori) M W Easterby 11 11 13 P Midgley 4-2443 SCARBA (74) (CD) (torkshre Recing Cub Owners Group) J Jefferson 10 11 8M Mello (7)
2 4-2443 SCARBA (74) (CD) (Yorkshire Reging CUb Owners Group) J Jetterson 70 Ti 8JM Meet (7)
3 535441 MENSHAAR (USA) (7) (D) (Miss S Stumberg) L Lungo 6 11 6
005/05 PONDERING (40) Lim Ennis) M Pipe 8 11 5
5 2-4503 SOUSSE (7) (Wanticale Recing Pertnership) Mrs M Reveley 5 10 10
PEPS22 WHAT JEM WANTS (11) (Clayton Bigley Partnership Ltd) J J O'Nell 5 10 6
POTEZ BING USE INVITO [11] (CAPE) DEGI PA SESED CON O COMES DO
REDAL MADED WAD AND AS IN Thorsand May C. Hale & C. R. R. R. R. Maceau

Nitrimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Cypress Avenue Set 13b, Devict's Way 9st 9b, Vilprano 9st 8b, Highland View Sat 4b, Blooming Spring 9st 2b, BETTING: 15-8 Manustrat, 4-1 What Jim Wante, 7-1 Sousse, 8-1 loder Wam, Cypress Avenue, 10-1 Scarba, 12-1 Pendering, 14-1 Jacobo Star, Straitmore Lodge, 16-1 Sam Champagne, Silver Stick, 10-1 Kithochsida Led, 33-1 othest 1997: Dockmaster 6 9 13 N Homodas (5) 14-1 (Mee M Miligan) 20 ran

### Results

Çaloz Lan

SANDOWN 1.48: 1. MOUNTAIN STORM (M A Fitzgerald) 5-2; 2. Percy Crow 5-8 fav; 3. Fin Bec 10-1, 10 ran. ½, 14, (N Henderson, Lambourn). Totale 2370; 2140, 2120, 5210. DF: 2340. CSF: 5738. Trio: \$1090. 2.20: 1. STORMY PASSAGE (F) Dur-

2.20: 1. STORMY PASSAGE (R Durwoody) 5-4; 2. Chenyfis Lad 8-11 far; 3. Mandalay 20-1.3 ran. 9, 24. (P Hobbs, Minehead) Tota: 22.00. DF: £130. CSF: £2.37.
2.50: 1. UPGRADE (C Liewelyn) 4-9 fav; 2. Announcing 50-1; 3. Assailable 9-4. 5 ran. 7, 11. (N Twiston-Davies, Chellenham). Tota: £160: £130. £530. DF: £1810. CSP: £2388.

2238.
3.25: 1. BARONET (R Johnson) 5-1; 2. Djeddeh 13-9; 3. Cetis Regrets 6-4 fax. 4 ran. Nt. dist (D Nicholson, Temple Gutting). Rote: £520. DF: £390. CSF: £231. NR: In-

3.55: 1. MONTROE (R Dunwoody) 6-4 tay; 2. Call My Guest 9-1; 3. Royal Action 11-4. 6 ran. 4, 18. (R Rows, Storrington). Tota: 52:30: 51:50, 53:20. DF: \$800. CSF: \$13:69. 2250; £150; £320. DF; £800. ČSF; £1569. NF; New Leat.
4.30; 1. PHILIP'S WOODY (M A Fitzgerald) 5-1; 2. Abovard 7-1; 3. Frazer Island
14-1.5 ran. 1-10 fas Spring Gale (4th), 3. 3.
(N Henderson, Lambourn). Tota: £300; £170; £190. DF; £840. CSF; £157;
5.00; 1. BOCA BOCA (M T Dourner) 9-2; 2. Steeplee Led 7-1; 3. All Gong 11-8 fav. 15 ran. 1, 7; FDourner, France); Fota: £550; £210; £240; £140. DF; £1840; CSF; £3342. This: £270. NF; Crazy Crusader.
Jackpot: £57830.

Jacknot: 2979.30. Placepot: £105.70. Quadpot: £64.60. Place 6: £16664 Place 5: £15.73.

FAKENHAM FANCENTIALEN
2.00; 1. LITTLE NOD (L. Cummins) 18-1;
2. Rifcerragh 20-1; 3. Zesti 14-1, 14 ran.
5-2 fav Kasteries (4th), 11/s, 4, U Best, Maid-stone), 104s : FU270; 55(9, 2770, 6420, DF;
205.80. CSF; 2284.70. Tricest: 04/73.34. Trice 228190. 2.30: 1. LLIV-U-FRANK (A P McCoy) 6-4

2.50 ft. LLV-U-FRANK (A P McCoy) 6-4 fex; 2. Lay R Off 5-1; 3. When Wonder 14-1 9 ran. 2%, 13. (M Pips, Walington), Yote: 52:10; £120, £240, £340, DF: £990, CSF: £1001 Tri-250, 2500 DF: 1500 CSF; FRB/I III-cast: £788, Thic: £550 ER (A P McCoy) 1-3 tay; 2. Take Cover 7-2: 3. Swyriford Pride 12-1.9 ran. 2: 18. (M Pipe, Wellington). Totas: £160; £100; £120; £230 DF: £180 CSF; £228, 7fo: \$400.

228. Tric: \$4.00.

3.35: 1. \$TRAIGHT ON (6 Bradley) 9-4;
2. Nirveme Prince 3-1; 3. \$alisong 25-1;
ran. 2-1 fez Organ Recital (red), 3, 2/-, (Mrs
D Harre, Newmarked, Tota: E3:0; 5:00. 5:140.
22:0. DF: \$440. CSF: 5:898. Tric: 25:50.
4.10: 1. PRO BONO (Mr \$ Durack)
evens fex; 2. Cracking idea 5-1; 3. James
The First 5-2, 8 ran. 6; ½; (W Caubed, Abbingdon). Tota: \$190; \$120, \$200, \$180. DF:
8880. CSF: \$7:50.
4.40: 1. CJ.ASSIC EAGLE (G Bradley) 5-2-

AAD: 1. CLASSIC EAGLE (G Bradley) 5-2; 2. Ken Risk 5-6 tay; 3. Holkham Bay 1:-2. 7 ran. 4. 1/4. (Mrs D Heine, Newmarker), Tota; C360; E220, E130, DF; £330, CSF; £562. acepot: £9160. Quadpot: £160. ace 6: £5648. Place 5: £3.11.

SOUTHWELL

1.40: 1. ACCYSTAN (L Charnock) 11-4; 2. Taylor's Pride 14-1; 3. Ludere 10-1 9 ran. 5-2 fav Bin Faa. 8, 5. (P Haslam), Tote: £290; £150, £350, £250, DF: £4550, CSF; £4021. 5-2 tav current St. C. S. S. D. P. 245.50. C. S. P. 140.21.
Tricast: 2322.10. Tric: \$58.00.
2.10: 1. HILLZAH (H Bastiman) 25-1; 2.
Notation 6-1; 3. Regenruffin Romeo 8-1
10 run. 4-5 fav Gide Path. 1, 3. (R Bastiman).
Totae 236.0; \$7.70, \$1.0, \$1.40. DF: \$2460.
C. SF: \$262.77. Tricast: \$1.254.3. Tric: \$108.0.
2.40: 1. ROVAL CASCADE (I. Newton).
7-1: 2. Patacagain Touch 5-4 fav; 3. Feeth-

2-40: 1. HOVAL CASCADE (I. Newton) 7-1; 2. Pelacogeta Kouch 5-4 fay; 3. Feeth-erstone Lane 15-2.5 ran. ½, 3½. (B McMa-hon). Totec £13:30; £2:00, £16:0. DF: £113:0. CSF: £5:38. 3.15: 1. BLUE ANCHOR (A Cultarie) 7-4 3.15: 1. SLUE ANCHOR (A Culture) 7-4
fay; 2. Highbury Legend 6-1: 3. Musaine
8-1: 9 ran. Hd, 2%, (Mrs M Reveley), Tota:
£200; £150, £190, £300, DF: £10.20, CSF:
£1264, Tincast: £5626. Trio: £3650,
3.45: 1. WHITE PLANS (D Sweerey) 1-6
fay; 2. Tycoon: Tina 13-2; 3. Natifie 12-1, 4
ran. 18, 30, (K Burley). Tota: £10. DF: £10.
CSF: £160.
4.20: 1. HEATHYARDS SHEIK (A Moculture) 7-88, fax: 2. Share Moveleys 6-1; 3.

4.20: 1. HEATHYARDS SHEIK (A Mc-Certhy) 13-8 fav; 2. Sharp Montey 5-1; 3. Slim Prior 10-1 8 ran. 2, ½, (R Holinahead). Tota: £250; £160; £220 DF: £310 CSF: £229, 4.50: 1. ANTONIAS MELODY (C Fague) 7-2; 2. River Ensign 11-4; 3. Divine Misse-P 11-8 fav. 7 ran. 1, 1 (S R Bowring) Tota: £2350; £280; £140 DF: £420 CSF: £1226.

Placepot: £57\*0. Quadpot: £7.70. Place 8: £166.64 Place 5: £115.73. • The amateur rider Tristan Barry was taken to hospital in King's Lynn after taking a heavy fall at Fakenham yesterday. Barry, riding Grand Entry in the hunter chase, was trapped underneath his mount when the

eight-year-old fell fatally at the ninth fence. INIDEDEET

INDEPE		
RACING	SERV	<b>ICES</b>
0891	<u>46 l</u>	+
LIVE COMMEN		RESULTS
NEWCASTLE	971 972	981 982
WINDSOR UNGRIED	973	963 964
WOLVERHAMPTON (E)	975 976	985 986
OR91 2	S RESUI	JS 70
Calls cost the per minute. T	Li ple Scrott	9 K24.49

GCING: Good (Good to Firm in places).

Left-hand course. Run-In of 240 yeards.

Course is west of city on B4095. Buses from rail stations at Warwick (rm) and Learning-Course is west of city on B4095. Buses from rail stations at Warwick (rm) and Learning-Course is west of course in Spa (2m). ADMINISTRON: Cub C13: Tetransale 29 (card-carying students half-price, according to the course from Spa (2m). ADMINISTRON: Course is C2 AP ARKL: 25 in members; control of course free.

LEADING TRAINERS: M Pige 28 winners from 14 runners (243%). D Nicholson 22-107 (205%). Man J Pitansan 17-76 (224%) M Twiston-Davies (2-85 (41%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 29 winners from 46 rules (413%). A Maguire 17-82 (207%).

J R Karvenagh 9-59 (53%). A Thornton 9-66 (136%).

FAVOURITIES: 170 wins from 428 races (347%).

BLRNGRED FIRST TIME: Manolete (310). GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places) 2.05 MICHAEL PAGE LEGAL NOVICE CHASE (CLASS B) £10,500 added 3m 2f

1 1112-1 BITOHAMDRUP (12) (D) (Mise Roberts) M J Roberts 7 11 10 R Durwoody
2 00-Rtr WISLEY WONDER (23) (D) (Misely Gof Parinership) N T-Daves 8 11 10 G Bradley
3 1211UT GALATASORI JAME (72) (D) (B L Birman) P Nichols 8 11 5 R Johnson - 3 declared - - 3 declared - - 5 declare 2.35 MICHAEL PAGE GROUP HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) 25,500 added 2m

black, white spots, ceries cap.

— 9 declared —
9 declared —
9 declared —
9 declared —
9 declared —
10 declared —

Village King was besten 50 lengths last time out at Chelterhem in the race won by Gut-Value of Ring was bettern to langurs ask other but are treatment in the race work by Cubichide, and races of the same mark in a much less competitive affair. Village Kings earlier Ludlow win from Samuel Wilderspin may have flattered him in a race which was stronger on quantity than quality. GIVE AND TAKE is not the most progressive horse in Martin Pipe's stable and he is 19th worse with Samsanid, whom he beat by ten lengths when both finished adrift of Acajou III at Uttoester last May. The only time James Events has ridden Give And Take, he put in one of his better races to finely a close third to Tinstram's Image in a 14-runner Taunton meiden hurdle. The other point in Give And Take's favour is that he was in his best form at this stage last season. Selection: GIVE AND TAKE

3.40 MICHAEL PAGE GROUP KINGMAKER NOVICE CHASE (Grade 2) (CLASS A) £19,000 added 2m yeliou, emerald green star, armiets and cap 214US- COUNTRY STAR (427) (D) (Mrs S Towler) C Brooks 7 11 5.... 24U5- COLINTRY STAR (427) (D) (Airs S Towled) C Brooks 7 to 5.

dark green, light green scenes, dark green cap
63133 GALE TOI (27) (D) (Airs Bandra McCarthy) P Malines 10 to 5.

dark gree 8 white stripes, green cap, white spots
P3152 GIPSY GEOF (15) (D) (S A Habbard) G Hubbard 7 to 5.

mercal green, white scenes, amenal green and white check cap
2112F LAKE KARBA (29) (D) (P Berber, A Cobum, T Carry) P Nahols 7 to 5.

dark green, white obseron, light green steenes, dark green and white check cap
405243 MON VENTAGE (7) (D) (Airn Matrix) M Chapman 7 to 5.

red and yellow diamonds, white scheres and cap
- 7 declared -

~ 7 declarer BETTING: 13-8 Queen Cf Spaces, 7-2 Asheel Boy, 5-1 Lake Kariba, 13-2 Country Star, 8-1 Gip-

### TIME: 13-8 Queen Of Spades, 7-2 Asharell Boy, 6-1 Lake Kariba, 13-2 Country Star, 8-1 Gipsy Geod, 10-1 Gale Tel, 20-1 Non Whitage 1997: Muligen 7 Til 2 A Magaire 5-6 far (D Nicholson) 4 man FORM GUIDE.

There was sustained support for Lake Keriba at Ascot lest month. He only got as far as the second fence and in the same race QUEEN OF SPADES ran disappointingly to finish a well beeten third behind Wade Road. In his previous runs at Utboseter and Kempton, Lake Keriba jumped slowly at times and he is hard to fancy on this quicker ground. Ashwell Boy had no enswer to Champleve at Ascot senter this month and was no match for Queen Of Spades at Chellamham in November. On her best form Queen Of Spades should win well, but there has to be a question mark tolowing that Ascot run. She finished only times and a half lengths in front of Melstock Meggle (receiving 8th) and it is possible that the latter's treiner, Charle Brooks, may provide the chief danger in Country Star, who was a very smart hundicap hunder and who has always promised to definer over fences. The stable's good record with horses reeppearing after a long absence is well documented. Glopsy Geof, who wents further, especially over a sharp track, was only five lengths behand Champlave at Lingfield, but the winning margin would have been a distance had Tony McCoy not essed the winner down to a walk. Gale Tol was in front of Non Vintage in the race won by Jack Doyle at Ludlow last month but neither look go Roccie.

4.10 QUESTOR INTERNATIONAL NOVICE TRIAL HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 2m 4f 110yds | HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 2m 4f 110yds

1 06-321 SAMUEL WILDERSPIN (22) (D) (Courty Graphic Coton) D Notroleon 6 to 12 ... R Johnson manuel, data black and manuel mismod alsenses, hosped cap

2 1-222 SONG OF THE SWORD (21) 8 ady Lloyd Webbert J Old 5 to 12 ... G Bradley pink and grey disenteds, pink cap

3 2 SALEEL (16) (John Al Racing Stables) Mrs J Flattan 6 to 13 ... R Durswoody writes, and demond, dabable on absence, quantered cap

4 SACTEAD MRL (GA Hubbard G Hubbard 5 to 3 ... Mischael Brennen ements green, white stences, smental green and writes check cap

5 2 ROSSMORE GIFL (25) (BF) (Mrs 7 Sainton) N Treatm-Davies 5 to 2 ... C Lionestyn grig, and seemes, block and red check cap

— 5 declared —

BETTING: 13-8 Song Of The Sword, 9-4 Salest, 3-1 Samuel Wilderspin, 9-1 Rossmore Gift, 25-1 Samuel Mills

1997: Influence Peotoler 4 10 6 N Williamson 16-1 (J Old) 5 ran

FORM GUIDE

SONG OF THE SWORD ran his best race in defeat last time out when besten three lengths by Ghiger Fox who was receiving 7th. The winner has declined to reoppose at levels, but judged on his run at Hurtingdon in December when dividing Road Racer and King Kato, Ginger Fox could be a smart horse. King Kato was the horse who gave Grey Shot a race at Ascot.As a winner over further at Sandown, there is a chance this trip will be on the sharp side for Song Of The Sword, but he has won over shorter trips at Chapseow and Hereford and he is quite happy setting off in front. The improving Samuel Witderspira is usually held up. Hard ridden to beat Skillwise by a neck at Donosster last time, he needs to improve again. Saleet appreciated the stiffer course when sant to Towcaster last time and finished three lengths second to Soloman. The extra half-mile is likely to see this Setse gelding in an even better light.

4.40 MICHAEL PAGE FINANCE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £10,500 added 2m 4f 110yds
1 1P-0P3 DUBLIN FLYER (21) (D) (J B Summer) T Forsier 12 12 0
2 P211P3 SENOR EL BETRUTTI (10) (CD) (Geneti Nock) Mis S Nock 9 12 0
3 12-50° TRYING ABAN (37) (0) (W H Dore) D Gendulio 10 10 12
4 F-61P POTTER'S BAY (21) (D) (Mrs J E Polier) D Nicholson 9 to 5
white, red braces, emerald green and white check aboves, white cap, red star  5 6/12P DARBHGEY (576) (Microel Applicity) R Curits 9 10 0
black, red disc, halved steeres, questered cap -5 declared -

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicep weighte: Daringly Bat 11th. BETTING: 6-4 Senor El Betrutil, 7-4 Dublin Flyer, 5-1 Potter's Bay, 6-1 Trying Again, 66-1 Daringly 1997: Senor El Betrutil 8 10 12 N Williamson 9-4 (Aris S Nocit) 3 ren FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

Dublin Flyer has been dropped another 7b since his test run, and a total of 17b this season. He showed some of his old fleir at Cheltenham before weakening to take third place, just over skitsen lengths behind Papillon and Pete The Parecn, who were at full stretch all the way to the line. Presibury Park has always been Dublin Flyer's favourite track, and there is a doubt about him reproducing that level of form at Warwick, where SENOR EL. BETRUTTI began his correlack in this race last year. Senor El Betrutti was not given a hard race once One Man and Strong Promise got away from him at Ascot last time, a race in which he had it all to do at level weights, if Senor El Betrutti can establish a good lack, he will take plenty of beating, especially on his favoured fast ground. Trying Again has been disappointing since his good start to the season in the Hennessy, a race in which he ran well until his stamina ran out.

Selection: SENOR EL BETRUTTI

П	<u> </u>	SRS STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE
Ŀ	<u> </u>	SRS STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m
1	54-3	BROTHER HARRY (22) (W Wherton) J Wherton 6 11 4
2	0	CAPTAIN REISTI FR (25) (Hamilton Hallouts & P. Jones 5 7) 4 Resid Research
3		CASH ON DEMAND RAIS P HITCHISSON R PRICER'S 6 11 A Q MARINE
4		CHRIST RED NOSE LI CREOMANI N MARCO-DEVIS 5 TI 4
5		GLACIAL RIVER (D.J. Caro): D.Caro 5 Ti 4
8	32	L'IUEFIX (46) Nats Peinck Sievenson I George E 7 4
7		MISTER-B CHEET BOTTON T D MCCENTRY 5 Tl 4 Mr T McCenthe
В		HEMARIZADE BOY ARISK N F TARRICAN Mrs. J Filman 5 Tl 4 D Promonado
9	0-	SALPURA (313) (BP) (The Valent Partneshir) A Stracker 6 11 4
10	_	SWISS SILVER (P Wegmann) P Wegmann 5 11 4 Miss E J Joose
11	0	THECREYOSS (106) (The Welburn Recing Society) R Woodhouse 5 ti 4
2		BETHS GIFT (Coln M Price) C M Price 5 10 13 D J Burchell
3		CRYSTAL VALE (JH & M E Stranger) P Hayward 5 10 13   Leverages
14		FUTONA (Mrs T D Plikington) Mrs T Plikington 6 10 13. V Stationy
15		SAINT CECILIA (Bran Eckley) B Eckley 5 TO TSX Alzpurs (5)
15		GURREAS GALORE (GB Racing) M Chapman 4 10 8
=		The second is a second of the

nck) J J Quinn 4 10 8. - 17 dectared BETTING: 13-8 Renardine Boy, 7-4 Chief Red Nose, 7-1 Brother Harry, 10-1 L'Idefix, 14-1 Satpu-ra, loto Battle, 20-1 others 1997: Semuel Wildespin 5 11 0 R Massey (& evens lav (D Mcholson) 22 ran

## Mixer fighting off loneliness of leadership

captain has more important things on his mind - the tender state of his battered

nib-cage, for starters - but he soldiers on like a seasoned showbiz trouper, razzling and dazzling his way through a 15minute press conference and a dozen separate television and radio interviews.

He presses the flesh and customary poise but to the acute observer, he is microscopically moodier than usual. Everybody wants a piece of Lawrence Dallaglio these days and just occasionally, he wishes they would find someone else's bones to pick.

Twenty-four hours later, he is back on Planet Positive. He has survived what he describes as a "fiery little contact session" under the unforgiving gaze of John Mitchell, the assistant England coach. His ribs have been tested to the limit and passed muster. "No reaction at ever a session that would have caused a reaction, that was it. Ever since we lost in Paris. John has been telling us how soft we are. I think we're a bit harder now."

Like most rugby types, Dallaglio far prefers playing a good game to talking one; ask him whether he would rather today's England-Wales match at Twickenham or have seven bells knocked out of him in training and he would take rather less than a nano-second to give you his reply. "I enjoy playing ball on a Saturday afternoon," he says. "It's that simple. Don't even ask me how I felt, sitting around on the sidelines watching Wasps lose at Bath last I do not like missing matches, period."

But life is not that simple for an England captain, as Dallaglio readily accepts. It is a solitary role, a one-man epic played out in the full view of the mob and while the latest star turn shows no sign of falling prey to the demonic insecurities that so exhausted his immediate predecessors - Will Carling, the Hamlet miscast as hero, and Phil de Glanville, the natural leader betrayed by a catastrophic dip in form - he is fully

In his brief career as the England captain, Lawrence Dallaglio has yet to lead his side to victory. But, as he told Chris Hewett, he remains a firm believer in long-termism

a decade this afternoon.

world, to be honest.

to advice. The ability to listen

is the greatest attribute you can

have as an ambitious sportsman.

tain, of course, everyone under

the sun has a piece of advice for

you and I understand that. You

can turn a deaf ear, of course.

"When you're England cap-

aware of the minefield he now camaraderie, the musketeerish

"I wouldn't say the job has made me feel lonely or isolated in any way, but I can quite see delivers his soundbites with how the captaincy might have that effect on someone who fails to guard against it," he says. "Fortunately, I'm not the kind of person who allows himself to become detached or disconnected. High-profile positions tend to have their lonely moments but klike to think I'm is likely to take months, maybe a mixer, someone who gets on with pretty well everyone both on and off the field.

Captaincy is great, a dream job, when things are going well. But there's a flipside to everything and the flipside to captaincy is that things blow up in your face now and again. The all," he says. "And if there was acid test is how much you're prepared to learn from the knock-backs, how adept you are at picking up the pieces and building something stronger than you had before.

"Long before I was ever made captain of anything, I decided that the only way forward in this game was to perform for the team first and myself secanswer seven questions about ond. You are so dependent on other people in rugby that when you get to international level, it is almost like going to war. Like any group of soldiers, the members of a team need absolute trust in each other. It's a You look after them and they'll look after you' thing. Once that trust in breached, everything falls

> or, indeed, anyone else in- being said, pick out the nuggets this team being critical of a colleague in public. I want to develop a culture of collective responsibility, firstly because rugby is a team game and it's pretty daft to stomp around blaming individuals for whatever goes wrong over the course of 80 minutes and, secondly, because in my book, you rally round when you see someone in difficulty. What you don't do is wait until after the game and talk behind his back."

Dallaglio's "core values" - the

Running

rugby at its

most

**Austintatious.** 

(Healey scores first try,

£20 pays £260\*)

**ENGLAND v WALES** 

Twickenham. Kick off 2.00 pm. Live on Sky.

**SCOTLAND V FRANCE** 

Murrayfield, Kick off 3,00 pm, Live on B&C.

4/1 SCOTLAND 1/7 FRANCE 22/1, DRAW

20/1 G. Townsend 4/1 France win by 11-15 points

25/1 R. Walmwright | 5/1 France win by 16-20 points

Other prices no request. Pensity tries do not count for first hysocret "Winnings shown include the \$20 you bet with deduction paid.

1/7 ENGLAND

First Tryscere

12/1 K. Bracken

12/1 A. Hasley 14/1 J. Guscot

14/1 R. Howley

14/1 M. Perry

16/1 N. Back

20/1 S. Quinnell

12/1 P. Carbonneau

4/1 WALES 22/1 DRAW

**Winning Points Margin** 

13/2 England win by 1-5 points

5/1 England win by 6-10 points

4/1 England win by 11-15 points

5/1 England win by 16-20 points

8/1 England win by 21-25 points

7/1 Wates win by 1-5 points

10/1 Wales win by 6-10 points

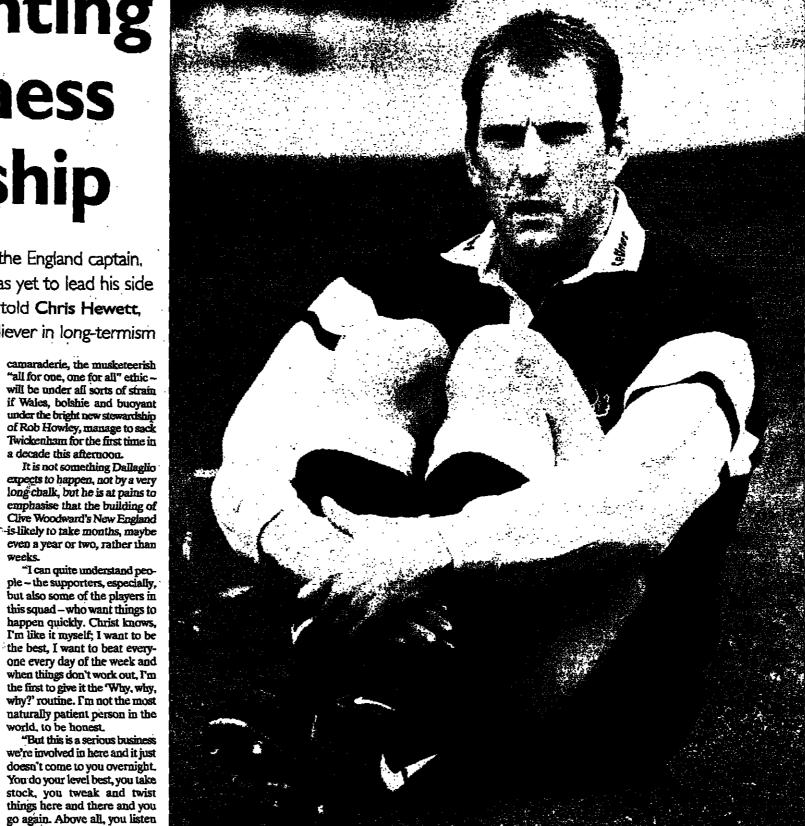
1 22/1 Wales win by 11-15 points

Wiening Points Margin

7/1 Scottand win by 1-5 points

10/1 Scotland win by 6-10 points

5/1 France win by 6-10 points



A good ear: The ability to listen is the greatest attribute you can have as an ambitious sportsman,' Lawrence Dallaglio said this week, as he prepared for today's game against Wales

What fascinates me is the and throw the rest overboard. No-one knows it all in this secret of maintaining peak pergame: not me, not the coaches, formance over a long period of not even the bloody All Blacks, time and it seems to me that the although they probably know key to consistent success lies internally rather externally. The more than most. Once you stop best put pressure on themlistening, you may as well go and selves; they set their own stan-Not only does Dallaglio lisdards and they keep at it, night and day, until they meet them. ten, both to Woodward and his coaching team and carefully And then what do they do? selected advisers outside the

"In rugby, I don't look much Blacks before Christmas was of players know that losing in provided he remains unbowed.

They set new standards. It never

ends, no matter what they may

ever manifestation he happens model outfit. But I'm also into find it and every time he distrigued by the Chicago Bulls, the covers a "little gem of infor- Williams Formula One team, and be dismissive to people. But mation", he works out a way of some of the yachtsmen who cumstances. What these people have in common is a drive from within. They're implacable in their pursuit of excellence and

> England team develop. We've got the talent in this country and we're pretty well looked after in terms of resources but there are certain differences, tiny but absolutely crucial, between ourselves and the real high-achievers. That is why the 26-all draw with the All long-termism in the squad. The a fig about being bloodied.

that's how I want to see this

sporting excellence in what- further than New Zealand as a more use to us than a win, Paris did not automatically which would have given us a make them a poor side, any false impression of where we more than drawing with the

> bad day. It was fairly clear, right from the outset, that something was wrong in our collective psychology. Do the Ali Blacks ever feel that? And if they do, from there." how do they go about dealing with it in such a way as to win a game they really ought to lose? That's what we have to discover and it will take a while to get there.

"Fortunately, it seems we've managed to instil a sense of England's captain does not give

Win or lose, you suspect that Dallaglio will thrive in his one-on-one today. His ribs may well give him all manner of jip and the Henry Cooper-ish scar tissue over his right eye may well split asunder once again. But

at lifting a major title at the age of 32, having lost the Common-Blacks made them a great one. "It didn't take me very long We lost sight of a few basics wealth belt to Paul Burke in Au-"That's why you won't hear the art of it is to digest what is modifying it for his own prove themselves time and in Paris a fortnight ago to re-against France and we hap-gust. That followed a again in incredibly difficult cir- alise we were going to have a pened to catch them on one of controversial points win at their good days. Against Wales, Bethnal Green in April over Fewe'll take it right back down to lix Bwalya, who subsequently winning our one-on-ones, our died three days after defeating individual battles, and build

Burke at the end of last year. The Commonwealth title is now vacant and Burke has been nominated to fight for the belt, with Ghana's Judas Clottev expected to be the opponent. Paul would like a re-match

with Burke but has focused on toppling Winters, who will be making his first appearance at home following 12 straight wins. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth cruiserweight champion;

Travails of

in the past

Boxing

Winter now

MARK WINTERS faces a battle of the mind in the first defence of his British light welterweight title against the

Londoner, Bernard Paul, in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, lonight. The Ulsterman returns to the ring following the unhappy circumstances surrounding his title victory in October at the Sheffield Arena when his oppo-

nent, Carl Wright, subsequently

fell into a coma, requiring neu-

ro surgery to remove a blood clot.

able recovery following his fight

for life and is backing the

champion's quest to make the

The unbeaten Winters, a

part-time travel agent in

Antrim, spent time with the Liv-

erpudlian and his family lead-

Boxing Union J champion Shea

Neary and Andy Holligan and

spent a lot of time with Carl,"

Winters said. "He has told me

to go on and win the Lonsdale

belt and I am dedicating this

ment of my career so far to win

the British title and the next day

it was the worst moment when

ring and my career was on bold

until I knew that Carl had re-

covered. Everybody asks me

how I will react once I get in the

ring and I simply won't know

One thing the 26-year-old is

certain about is victory over

Paul, although the former Com-

monwealth champion has pre-

dicted that he will knock him

Winters retorted: "There is no

chance that I will lose my title to

Bernard. He says he is a hard

puncher but I've been sparring

with Shea Neary and Bernard

Paul, from Tottenham, is

arguably having his last attempt

doesn't hit harder than him."

out "in the later rounds".

"I considered quitting the

"It was the greatest mo-

fight to him.

I heard about Carl.

until I get in there.

"I spent a week in Liverpool sparring with the WBU [World

ing up to his first defence.

nce night

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Lonsdale belt his own.

Wright has made a remark-

Darren Corbett, faces the Belgian Dirk Wallyn in a 10-round non-title fight. Wallyn was last seen in a British ring losing in 90 seconds to the former European champion Johnny Nelson and Corbett is expected to deliver a similar result before his world title bout with the World Boxing Organisation champion. Carl Thompson.

"I can't take any chances because my title fight with Thompson would be gone if I lost," said Corbett. "The fight with Thompson is expected to tappen on 18 or 25 April.\*

The unbeaten Brixton heavy weight Danny Williams should chalk up his 13th straight victory inside the distance when he faces Tim Ray from Kentucky.

### Lee speeds in to last four

### Snooker

Stephen Lee made it a television debut to forget for the surprise Regal Scottish Open quarter-finalist, Chris Scanlon,

in Aberdeen yesterday. Lee, the world No 16, raced to a 5-0 whitewash of his London rival in just 84 minutes to reach his second major semi-final of the season.

The unheralded Scanlon had won his previous two games by the same margin but, as Lee admitted: "I don't think I would have beaten Chris by that score if I'd been playing on one of the outside tables.

"Chris couldn't really settle down, probably because it was his first time before the cameras."

Lee now meets the Scotsman Marcus Campbell or Scanlon's practice partner, Ronnie O'Sullivan, in the semi-finals today.

## Scots hope for another home upset

By Simon Turnbuli

do something else."

narrow confines of the national

squad, but he studies as well. He

investigates the dynamics of

IT SHOULD perhaps only be whispered in the mill towns of the Scottish Borders, but the winning team at Murrayfield this Grand Slam. If Scotland happen to emerge victorious even those unfortunates who bought sweaters commemorating the 1996 Scottish Slam that never was, before Dean Richards gave Rob Wainwright's men a mauling at Murrayfield, might be moved to actually don their premature purchases tonight.

The metaphorical counting of chickens is one thing, though. Accounting for the French cockerel promises to be quite another matter.

France have won five sucessive matches in the Five Nations' Championship since the 16-15 defeat in Cardiff that handed the 1996 title to England. Scotland will have to unhatch one of the all-time upsets to stop Les Tricolores stretching their winning run to six.

The form book has been famously torn up for this fixture the Scots went homeward tae

before. The French have a habit of freezing on Scottish soil. Nations' defeat. Only once since 1978 have they

won at Murrayfield. That was four years ago. when Jean-Luc Sadourny afternoon will be halfway to a scored the opening try in a 20-12 success. Of the French XV who line up today, only he and Olivier Brouzet have savoured victory over the Scots in Scotland. It is a psychological crumb upon which the Scottish camp are hoping to feast. "I would like to think there is still a Murrayfield factor." Jim Telfer, Scotland's coach, said.

> This factor did not, however, spare the Scots from ritual slaughters in their two pre-Christmas home internationals. Australia and South Africa inflicted record defeats, 37-8 and

68-10 respectively. France ought to bury their Edinburgh bogey under a similar barrage of points this afternoon. It is, after all, just 11 months since the 47-20 Paris mis-match that left them celebrating their first Grand Chelem clinched on home ground while

France showed in their 24-17 win against England a fortnight ago that their own trampling by the Springboks has not done any permanent damage to the combination of forward power and attacking pace that Jean-Claude Skrela and Pierre Villepreux have blended into their ranks. Scotland's victory in Dublin was an altogether more prosaic affair.

The class gap between the nations is perhaps further emphasised by the extent of attacking faith the Scottish selectors have invested in Derrick Lee. "Derrick is an exciting young prospect who gives us attacking options," Telfer said. "He played well against Ireland."

The London Scottish fullback, however, only played the final five minutes in Dublin. That is the extent of international experience he will bring to bear in direct opposition to Sadourny, who won the first of his 61 caps as a replacement for Serge Blanco in Cardiff seven years ago.

think again with a record Five SCOTLAND v FRANCE

A SCO I EAT	<u>~</u>	TIOUTE TO	_
		- C-11	-
at M	Urro	ry field	
		J-L SadournyColomier	
A Stanger Hawick	14	P Bernat-SallesPa	u
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D CroninWasps	4	F PelousToulous	6
D WeirNewcastle	5	O BrouzetBègles-Bordeau	
R WainwrightDundee HSFP	6	M Lievremont Stade Françai	έ.
S HolmesLondon Scottish	7	O Magne Briv	,
P Walton	8	T LievremontPerpignal	=
Substitutes: 16 R Shapherd (Mekase),		Superiores & X C	•
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Nicol (Bath), 19 S Grimes (Watsonians).		ié (Colomiers), 19 P Benetton (Agen)	•
20 A Roxburgh (Kelso), 21 G Graham		20 T Cleda (Pau), 21 C Soulette	•
(Nowcastle), 22 G Ellis (Currie).		(Béziers), 22 M Dai Maso (Agen).	,
Reformed P O'Dring Marin 70-1-	^		
Referee: P O'Brien (New Zeala	מיים)	) <b>Kick-off:</b> 3.0 (BBC1)	J

Scotland's task might not be score tries in four successive

so daunting if the cutting edge Five Nations games. The trouof Sadourny was the extent of ble is the Newcastle Falcon will their worries. From one to 15, probably have his claws full though, the French have the sharpness to slice through.

It is likely to be a losing battle, too. But, then, Scotland Alan Tait stands to make history as the first Scottish player would still be a third of the way

since Johnny Wallace in 1925 to to a Triple Crown.

McRae's relative success is the spur for elusive British driver's championship

fighting a rearguard battle.

later on," McRae will be in action today when he opens Volkswagen's bid to retain the manufacturer's championship in the scason's curtain-raiser, the

which will be a major step

forward on the tarmac round

Silverstone rally sprint. His own personal pursuit of glory will begin in the first round of the driver's series, the

ALISTER McRAE is determined to emulate his two brother Colin took the crown in The hearthreak of 1997 still the manufacturer's champi-1991 and 1992 before going on onship last year despite their haunts McRae but it has made famous rallying relatives by him more determined to make winning his second Mobil to become one of the world's British Championship this year. leading rally drivers. amends this year. "I was disap-Manx event. pointed to miss out on the Alister had an excellent The 27-year-old from La-

nark knows that to uphold fampionship last year when he ily pride, be must add to his 1995 headed the standings going into the final round on the Isle of

set for giory, the Scot crashed I'm not sure about winning it five between 1981 and 1988, and still competes successfully in the way clear for Mark Higgins to championship's category for prise the title from his grasp. historic cars. And Alister's

No1 driver's mishap in the "I'm very confident about championship last year and it's the coming season," said

McRae. "We know our car will be very competitive on the "I'd like to win the title again gravel event early in the season

Vauxhall Rally of Wales, next

Ladbrokes triumph in the British series. McRae's father Jimmy cap-For a bet, Ladbrokes are favourite. tured the title on five occasions Man. But just when he looked

chance to claim a second cham-

his Volkswagen Golf and left the times like my father did." McRae has plenty of faith in his Volkswagen team, who won

certainly something I'm hoping to put right this time," he said.

to equal Colin's record, although and will have a new model,

## No qualms with Kwan's artistry, but the ice still left me dry



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CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV

IN A WEEK when the Ameritogether. Picture Tara Lipinski, cans are shaping up to play the global bully again, it was fun to see them having their butts whipped on the ice in Nagano (BBC, Eurosport). CBS had paid £235m for the rights to the Olympic Games, nearly as much as Brian Laudrup's pay packet at Stamford Bridge next season, but once their men's ice hockey team was knocked out, Americans indulged in their true national sport, operating the TV remote. It was during the figure skating, which was about all they had left (and about which I was slightly unkind last week) that I began to muse on ways to make the Games more specta-

My first idea was to run the skating and the ice bockey

who seems to have been plucked from one of those obscene child beauty pageants (such psychosexual dynamite that adult spectators aren't allowed in), going through her routine at the same time as the Czech Republic and Kazakhstan were conducting research into the effects of severe physical trauma during sporting activity: weaving her way through a statom of severed appendages, a Czech arm to her left, a Kazakh nose to her right, skidding nimbly through the pools of

Or the style-free Frenchman, Philippe Candeloro, who cut easily the most ridiculous figure in Nagano in his red and black unopsuit, clearly the result

blood, which she rearranges in

graceful arcs across the ice...

of an unnatural union between Michael Flatley, Bruce Springsteen and a dead dog, bodychecked out of town by a couple of Finnish enforcers.

Or you could have a special bobsleigh course that dipped in the middle and put the two worst crows from the first run against each other, starting at opposite ends and providing fun and laughter for all the family when they meet in the middle. Or better still, strap drug cheats (or Naseem Hamed) to a luge and run them off against the fourman hit squad (I admit here to the influence of the greatest comedian who ever lived, Bill Hicks, who advocated letting

aged relatives go out with a bang

as extras in Stephen Seagal

movies: "Go on, grandma, walk

out into the middle - Wow, cool! He's kicked her head off!") My favourite idea, though,

and I don't see why it couldn't be done, would be to have knock-out head-to-heads in the downhill skiing, just like the FA. Cup, OK, they'd have to do a few more runs, but they could manage that, and how much better to race man against man, woman against woman, rather than out there alone shaving microseconds off the clock. You could, of course, run them all together, but that would just be silly.

With last week's harsh words in mind, I settled down to watch skating this week equipped with a vat of pen-poison. A short while later, I found myself doing the hitherto unthinkable rewinding to watch Michelle

Kwan's routine a second, slightly shamefaced time.

The young American went to the Games riding a hype-wave hand-in-hand with her rival, Lipinski. It is unfair on them both, but I can't help associating them in my mind with Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding from four years ago, though can't imagine Lipinski involved in anything more violent than thereaming and thereaming till she's thick. She is technically perfect, but a little soulless, while Kwan has the artistry: one manoeuvre, a spiral, in which she inscribed a line across the rink that had the finesse of a line drawing by Picasso, Matisse or Cocteau, was a lump-in-thethroat job. Honest. So I take it ITV have the Pudgy Twins, Eaall back. Well, most of it. After

Kwan, all else was bathos, apart from the experience of watching the third American, Nicole Bobek, falling apart like the Spurs defence, and then observing her tearful agony as she waited for her lousy marks. In its own way, as gory as the hockey.

It seems these days that you cannot go more than a couple of months without another sports magazine programme leaping on to the screens. The BBC's Onside was the most recent, and Carlton's imaginatively-titled The Sports Show is presumably intended as a response.

If so, it needn't bother itself, eschewing as it does the sportslite, Cosy Corner approach of John Inverdale and his team. monn Holmes and Will Carling,

instead, and though Carling has still to learn how to look relaxed, Holmes was surprisingly unfluffy, making sure each discus-sion stayed rational and interesting. They tried to pack far too much in, Holmes leaping in on someone's mid-flow time and again. Having as guests the card-happy referee Graham Poll, and his assessor for the controversial Arsenal-Chelsea game this week, Philip Don, was a great idea, so why not let them expound at length?

The programme did, though, produce the line of the week, on the subject of the 40 per cent ticket-price hike at Chelsea. "I'm going to have my wages paid directly into the club," one fan said. "It's the only way to get a season ticket these days."

Williams pair

THE NEW Formula One season is still a fortnight away and already Williams, the world champions, are contemplating their driver line-up for next year. Incumbents Jacques Vil-

leneuve and Heinz-Harald

Frentzen are on the teams' list

of candidates for 1999, but both

will have to meet requirements

title last year, must decide by the

middle of the season if he wants

to stay at Williams, while

Frentzen has to improve his lev-

el of performance if he wishes

Frank Williams and his part-

ner, Patrick Head, are exescious

Villeneuve is wanted by his man-

ager, Craig Pollock, to lead the

British American Racing team, which is to be kunched next year.

They are equally aware the Ca-

nadian will seek evidence of the

operation's potential infore

committing himself and may

prefer more time than they are

would want to be sorted with the

drivers we are running with in

1999 in the middle of the year.

We won't be strung along wait-

ing for Jacques. We'll be letting

him know about our timetable."

Frentzen's inconsistency last

year disappointed the team,

Williams describing him as a

"frustrating individual at times".

Head made it clear they de-

manded better this year. He said:

'He knows this year he's got to

perform if he's going to stay at

top team. The truth is that

being a well-paid driver is a priv-

ileged position, but successful

drivers make things happen. He

Head said yesterday: "We

prepared to perceit him.

Villeneuve, who won the

spelled out yesterday.

to be retained.

given early time check

Motor racing By Derick Alisop

## Incentive high for hopefuls

Cricket

**Derek Pringle** reports from Georgetown

IF THERE is a place designed to test the mettle of England's cricketers mid-way through their tour it is the next fortnight in Georgetown. A city built almost entirely of wood, it sits on the mouth of the mighty Essequibo river, a place where frontier meets backwater and the stuff coming out of your tap is the colour of tea.

The combination does not prevent the people here from Australia at The Oval five dreaming about cricket, and although the place has done for one or two illustrious careers -Craig McDermott, the Australian fast bowler, ended his career when he twisted his ankle while jogging along the sea. wall - others such as Mark Ramprakash, whose father comes from these parts, will be looking to restart theirs.

Over the next three days, England, who will play all those not involved in the last Test, take on Guyana at the Everest Cricket Club. While Angus Fraser and Dean Headley take a well deserved rest - as does Graham Thorne who has flu there will be fierce competition, especially among those who have yet to play a match, to catch the selectorial eye.

Depending on the pitch expected at the Bourda, where the fourth Test starts on Friday, the places most under pressure are at No 3 and 6 in the batting order, though a second spinner may also be an option.

However, with Mark Butcher having taken his 11thhour opportunity in the previous Test, it is John Crawley, the man in possession, who faces the sternest challenge from Ramprakash, though Adam Hollioake, providing his back has recovered, will also be in the shake-up.

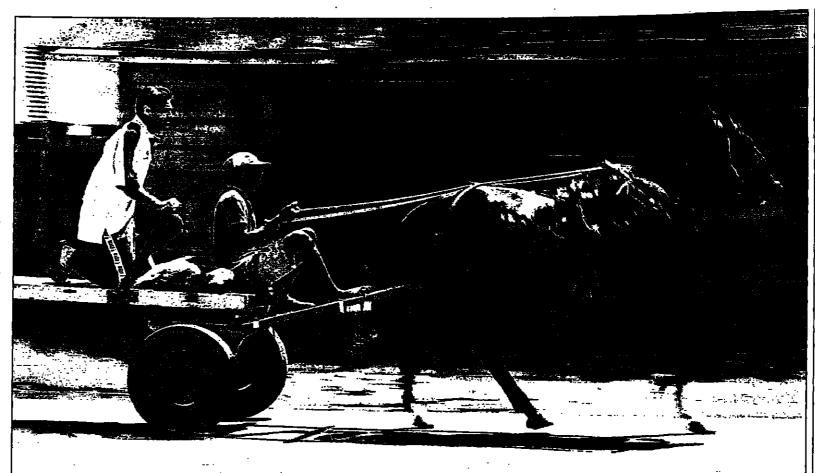
Since his debut in 1992, Ramprakash's Test career has been a series of false starts and disappointments, a fact his average of 17.2 indicates. Yet even when he plays well, as he did in the thrilling win against months ago, fate always seem to conspire against him.

"I must admit, I came here expecting to start in the Test team," said Ramprakash, an assumption that appeared to be backed up when two of the selectors Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch, phoned earlier in the tour to enquire why Crawley had been preferred.

Ironically, in view of spend some time at the crease." Butcher's subsequent role, he would probably have played instead of the Surrey man in the last Test, had flu not struck him down the night before.

Frustration, particularly on this level, was not something the young Ramprakash would approach with equanimity. But if the responsibilities of fatherhood and the Middlesex captaincy have helped ameliorate his fiery disposition, the temptation to be ue as a currency of comparison. victims in the first innings. If, gung-ho about the next few days must still be fairly strong?

as your big chance," said Ramp- narine Chanderpaul, is strong, rakash, who scored a century in and contains the fast bowler



Mark Ramprakash is finally heading for his first game of the tour against Guyana today

the corresponding fixture four Reon King, a previous acyourself. It's my first competitive not expecting too much, just to Lambert.

Pressure or not, the nitch at a degree of unreality, the fact these first-class matches is Indies cricket. bowled by spinners, as opposed to about 10 per cent or less in bert played his only Test match the Tests, means that runs here against England in 1991, when will not be worth their usual val- he was one of Phil Tufnell's six

Apart from that, the opposition, who will be captained in "You could look at this Carl Hooper's absence by Shiv-

years ago. But that would be quaintance from the West putting too much pressure on Indies A match earlier in the tour, as well as the prolific leftmatch since September, so I'm hand opening batsman Clayton

If England are dwelling over England A 186; Sri Lanka A 190-7 o might hat at No 3, calls in Everest looks a far better sur- several local newspapers for face than any of the Test pitches the inclusion of the 36-year England have so far encoun- old Lambert to replace Stuart tered. But if that perhaps offers Williams in the Test team, reveals the serious lack of batting that 80 per cent of the overs in depth currently afflicting West A stalwart for Guyana, Lam-

> like Ramprakash, he still has aspirations of adding to his tally of caps, it is a mistake he will not be wanting to repeat over the next couple of days.

### England pressure falls short

Myles Hodgson reports from Matara

ENGLAND A fought against tour fatigue to fail to seven balls short of claiming a memorable victory and levelling the series

ternational against Sri Lanka A. Needing victory to draw level in the three-match series after their 142-run defeat in Moratuwa on Wednesday, England A made a determined attempt to defend a disappointing total of 186 but were unable to prevent Sri Lanka A succeed-

ing in the penultimate over. However, despite their failure to reach a challenging total, England bowled and fielded superbly and pressured Sri Lanka to such an extent that they 47 off the final 10 overs with three wickets remaining.

"We're very disappointed because we have lost the series but it was a magnificent effort in the field and we felt 186 was in yesterday's second one-day in- a bit short of a good total," Nick Knight, the captain, said. Ben Hollioake epitomised England A's determination by bowling Avishka Gunawardene with the first delivery of the innings.

> England had suffered an equally disastrous start after being put into bat by losing Knight, Andrew Flintoff, Hollioake and Darren Maddy inside the opening 21 overs.

## Sri Lante A won toes ENGLAND A "N V Knight run out ....... A Fintoff c Gurswardene b B C Holloele b Pellysguru O A Sheh c and b Bandard F Seinem at Descarayate b Banderfiles F Glies c and b Chanders R Brown at Descarayate b Chanders R Brown at Descarayate b Chanders L Coster run out vas (b) 15 W // 1 (48.3 over Total (48.3 overs) \_\_\_\_\_\_186 Feb: 1-22 2-27 3-63 4-86 5-132 6-139 7-155 8-166

9-103. Bowling: Botelu 7-2-19-0; Paliyaguru 7-1-30-2; Hathurusinghe 3-0-17-0; Jayanerdane 3-0-18-0; Bandardiele: 10-1-28-3; Chandane 9-1-30-3; Kalpage 93-0-34-0. u C Hathursahghe c Kright b Brown R P Armold not out.
R P Armold not out.
D R M Jayesentoine c Read b Brown P Havege c Read b Hathoeke
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U D U Chardens low b Maddy
R Pallyaguru c Coster b Maddy
P B Dessenteyels not out
Extens (b4 w<sup>2/2</sup>) SRI LANKA A A Gungwardene b Hollicele e c Knight b Brown ......16 R Pallyagaru c Costar b Medity 3
1° B Dassensyste not out 30
Extres (b4 v12) 18
Total (for 7, 48.5 overs) 190
Fet: 1-0 2-40 3-54 4-107 5-128 6-134 7-140
Did not bas N Bandardileia, N Botaju
Bowling-holicale 10-39-2; Brown 10-1-30-2;
Ealtram 9-0-31-0; Giles 95-0-48-0; Costar

has to be more assertive." Even if there are changes at Williams next year, Head does not expect Michael Schumacher to be joining them. "The idea of Frank signing a cheque big enough for Schumacher just doesn't seem real," Head said.

"I understand Schumacher has a opt-out clause if Ferrari don't win the championship this year and if he leaves them I think it's likely he will go to McLaren-Mercedes. I know Mercedes are pretty keen to get him on board. He's less likely

to be at Williams." • Ken Tyrrell has announced his retirement from Formula One with immediate effect. The 73year-old chairman of the Tyrrell Racing Organisation, which was bought out by British American Racing in November. stepped down yesterday along with his son, Bob, the business

Tennis

### Smith flies ahead as Silk Cut drops anchor

. -- `

e speeds in

THE SKIPPER of the British yacht Silk Cut, Lawrie Smith, spent his 42nd birthday guiding his boat into Ushuaia on the southern tip of Argentina yesterday to take on the extra food and diesel which will enable her to complete the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World race.

Silk Cut had been sailing under jury rig for 10 days following the loss of the top section of her mast\_"We hope to be in port less than 12 hours," Smith said. "We are still racing."

Sporting Digest

again. He and five of his crew will fly the remaining 2,000 miles to the finish at São Sebastião in Language. Brazil to prepare a new mast. The all-women crew of EF

Education are also heading for Ushuaia, but are still 680 miles from Cape Horn. Brunel Sunergy duly moved

into second place after their audacious decision to sail around the eastern coast of the Falkland Islands. While Innovation Kvaerner, Merit Cup. Swedish Match and Toshiba have been becalmed to the west for two days.

Smith, however, will not be Roy Heiner took the roundaboard when Silk Cut puts to sea about route and leapfrogged four places to head the pack behind the runaway leader, EF

> Heiner is now ahead of thirdplaced Innovation Kvaerner by nme miles and is averaging 15 knots. His rivals are only able to achieve nine knots at best.

WHITEREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE (Fifth leg, 6,670 miles, Auchtand, NZ, to São Sebastião, Bra): 1 EF Language (Swe) P Cayard 983 miles to finais; 2 Brund Sunergy (Noth) R Hainer +683; 3 hnovetion Kvaemer (Not) K Frestad +622; 4 Mert Cup (Monaco) G Deiton +6258; 5 Swedish Match (Swe) G Krantz +6262; 6 Chesse Racing (US) D Smith +628; 7 Rothel (US) P Standbridge + 630; 8 Sk Cut (68) L Smith +176; 9 EF Education (Swe) C Guilou + 1816.

### Jackson and Hall enlisted to add experience at Featherstone

### Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS have continued their build-up for a tilt at the First Division title by signing the experienced and versatile Anthony "Chico" Jackson from Hull.

Jackson, who has played both wing and prop for the Humberside team, is initially on a month's loan, but could be available for a permanent move. Like the former Leeds and Bradford centre, Carl Hall, who has joined Rovers on trial, he is in line to make his debut against Hull KR tomorrow.

Simms, feels he needs a bit of experience and steadiness to go along with them," said the in the same match. Featherstone secretary, Terry Mullaney.

Leigh's prop, Tim Street, has been cleared to play against Whitehaven after avoiding further punishment for his sending-off against Sheffield in the Challenge Cup last week.

sent off in the defeat by the Hall has been playing rugby amateurs of Ellenborough have union for Moseley, but the New had mixed fortunes. Chris Ross Zealander is keen to return to has been suspended for four league. "We have a very young matches but Rob Wilson has team and our coach. Steve been found not guilty and has also been told that no action will be taken over another incident

The two Hunslet players

Jim Rudd, who kicked off Cup final for Dewsbury in 1929 and died on Christmas Day at the age of 98, is to have his wish granted by having his ashes scattered behind the goals at the stadium tomorrow.

"We do receive occasional requests of this nature but were especially touched by Mr Rudd's desire for his ashes to be scattered on the hallowed turf," said Wembley's press officer, Martin Corrie. "He holds a unique place in

the history of rugby league at Wembley." The League and the BBC

the first Wembley Challenge are encouraged by viewing figures for this year's competition, which peaked at 4.5 million for the Leeds-Castleford tie last Saturday and almost 1m for St Helens' match at Featherstone on BBC2 on Sunday.

### development director.

I LETITIS
ELIROPEAN COMMUNITY ATP TOURNAMENT (Authrep) Singles, second round: M
Rosset (Swit) of Y Kaleinflov (Rus) 3-6-4-6-3;
G Russelsis (GSI) at G Roune (Fr) 7-6-3-6-7-6;
P Rafter (Aux) to C Proine (Fr) 6-4-7-6; X Nuclear
(Stovals) bt B Liferach (Cz Rep) 6-1-6-1 Custter-finale; G Russelsis (GSI) bt T Johnsson (Swe)
8-3-4-6-4; M Prosset (Swit) bt M Lusson (Swe)
who

### Oarsmen to decide coach's future

### Rowing

THE FATE of Jürgen Grobler as chief coach of the British men's team lies in the hands of Steve Redgrave and other leading British oarsman.

Despite allegations that Grobler was a key figure in the doping of East German rowers in the 1970s and '80s, he has earned the respect and trust of the British team who he inspired to a record eight medals at last year's World Championships in France.

Redgrave and his partner, Matthew Pinsent, while unavailable for comment yesterday, are both believed to be backing their coach.

in-house meeting with athletes ment yesterday.

and other officers of the association and base any decision on their views," said the Amateur Rowing Association chairman, Martin Brando Bravo.

"We have a clean, drugs-free sport in this country. This issue is ruining our good work." The allegations that Grob-

ler, who also acts as Redgrave's personal coach alongside his duties to the British team, first surfaced last weekend.

Grobler, 51, spent nearly 20 years as a coach to East Germany's dominant men's and women's teams.

So far he has refused to confirm or deny the allegations "We are going to have an and was unavailable for com-

### Badminton THOMAS CUP MEN'S WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP Asian qualifying fourna-ment (Manila, Phil): Mabyeis 4 Japan 1; Thei-land 4 Singapore 1; Talwein 5 Canada 0;

UBER CUP WOMEN'S WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP Asian qualifying bourna-mant (Manila, Phil): China 5 Japan C; New Zeeland 3 Malaysia 2

Basketball

ABA: Indexa 82 Philedelphia 77; Chicago 23 Toronto 86; San Antonto 87 Delle 81; Houston 00 Delmid 90; Mismil 89 LA Clippers 80; LA Leions 131 Deriver 82 BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Watford 97 Crystal Petaco 92. Pelace 92.
MEN'S EUROL EAGUE: Group E: Maccabi Tel Aviv 78 Crostia Spit 69; Olympialice Praeux (G) 64 Turk Telefom 60 Group F: Benetio Traviso (t) 63 CSKA Moscow 77. Group G: Albe Berth 58 Kinder Bologne (t) 68 Group H: ABK Athens 68 Perfican Belgrade 76: Teamsystem Bologna (ti) 79 Hepbel Januselem 60.

Warwickshire's Michael Bell, the 31-year-old left-arm pace bowler, will be free to join another county on 5 March after a successful appeal to the England and Wales Cricket Board for a switch to an uncontested List Two registration

registration.

Australia's Cricket Board and the players union meet at a secret location today with both parties appearing close to settling their long-running

## A Brange of burg to Dourse A Brange of burg to Dourse H Street bur to Corner H Whiteld of Petrors to Calms S Hodds of Petrors to Calms (6.19 not)

FERST TEST (Wellington, seco

Extras (bt. br)

Total (for 3)

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To bath C D McAllian, C L Ceirns, D J Nash, D L

Vetton, S B Doull, S B O'Connot.

Bowling, Sto defing: Street, 1-8-39-1; Mbarques
1-3-38-1; Mbarques
1-3-

**Drugs in Sport** Seven Australian sportsmen tested positive for steroids in the last three months of 1997, the Australian Sports Drugs Agency said yesterday. None of the offenders had competed at international level. There were also four positive tests for pseudoephedrine and

Blyth fait, New Zealand's Olympic champion, received cheques totalling 214,000 yesterday after whrning the global and Europe 2 zones of the World Three-Day Event Rankings. WORLD 1 TIBBE-LEW EVERT HERKINGS.
LAND ROVER FE WORLD THREE-DAY
EVENT RANKINGS: Global: 1 B Talt (NZ); 2
M King (65); 3 D OCCONOR (US); 4 M Codd (NZ); 5
A Nicholson (NZ); 5 M Ryen (Aus); 7 W FoxPit (65); 8 B Dastoson (US). Zone wimser: Einrope 1: C van Rijdsputrael (Bal). Europe 2: B
Talt (NZ). Europe 3: P Plesend (Pol). Coemie:
1 Strates (NZ). Merchandrics: P Dasseon (US).
South America: P Dasseon (US).
South America: P Dasseon (US).
Herit (NZ). Neveroamers: 3 Wright-Morris (US).
Mert Phillips team tropby: New
Zepland.

Footbali Arsenal have lost their last link with the great Herbert Chapman team of the 1930s with the death of the former England captain George Male at the age of 87. Male served Arsenal for more than 50 years, first as a player, then a coath and finally a scout. FA CARLING PREMISHSHIP Re-arranged the ture: Wed 29 April: Choken v Blackburn (from 28 March). 28 March).
NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE Post-poned fixture: Sat 28 March: Middlesbrough

SCOTTISH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION: Post-poned fixtures: Wed 25 Feb: Reith v Airchie; St Mirren v Staffig. AFRICAN NOTIONS' CUP Guestes-fixel (Bobo-Dioulasses, Burkine Fixed: Demovatic Republic of Congo 1 [Tondelux 30] Currencon 0. INTERNATIONAL FIRSTINI's (MacKensh). As Install Co.

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Postine League Prender Division: Notingham Forest 2 Sinks 3 Joseon Wassex League: Whitchurch 0 Couse Sports 1 Harp National League of Ireland Prender Division: Durchak 1 UCD 2 Instance 10 post-final first leg: Alexent 1 League 1 Prender Division: Durchak 1 UCD 2 Instance 1 League 1 Prender 1 League 1 Leagu

GOTT
CANON CHALLENGE (Sydney) Leading first-round scores (Aus unions stated); 136 P Gow 84 72; M Goggin 68 88; P O'Meley 63 73; G Kenny 87 98; 137 M Long (M2) 70 67; 3 Talt 89 88, 138 P Lonerd 70 58, 139 S Scalls (M2) 70 67; 3 Talt 89 88, 138 P Lonerd 70 58, 139 S Scalls (M2) 71 69; G Simpson 89 71; W Grady 89 71; R Davis 70 70; J Cooper 72 68; L Wissids 68 72; R Backwell 58 71; R Swenson 72 68; L Wissids 68 72; R Backwell 58 71; R Swenson 72 68; S Lonerd 68 T Larkman, D Duwal, 67 J Kaya, D Sudhertend, J Delsing, 68 (US unione missect: 65 J Laormard, 66 T Lahrmard D Duvel, 67 J Kaya, D Suthertsand, J Delsing, 68 S Jones, M Calaterechia, J McGovern, J Kern S Lowery, T Dodds (SA), G Hradlut, Selected 69 S Lyle (GB), 70 N Feldo (GB). tes S Lyes (eds), 7 In Felico (GB), DMENSION DATA PRO-AM (Sun Chly) Land-ing second-round scores (SA unless atteleri-lary Preser Country Club: 139 B Veugham (LS) 70 BB 1441 M Gordam BB 72; B Phytz 72 BB 142 F Wessels 73 BB 144 W Scriutre 72 72, 145 S Pappas 73 B7; P Saleks 75 70, 146 S van der Marwe (Nam) 74 72; J Hawles 73 78; C Dah-son 78 B5; M Procise (GB) 72 78; P Wessen (GB) 72 74; I Palmer 71 75, Losd City GC; 136 N Pitce

(Zin) 69 57, 139 C Kemps 70 69, M McNuky (Zin) 73 68, 140 C Whiteley 72 69, 141 M Archer (GB) 73 68, 143 D Frost 73 70; B Lincoln 73 70; T van der Well 69 71; W Abery 69 74; D Pappas 71 72; W Coessee 72 71. AWAIIAN WOMEN'S OPEN (Cahu) Loadin

HAWAIIAN WOMEN'S OPEN (Dainty) Leading Inst-nound scores (US unless stated): 65 W Ward, 66 D Domarn, 67 B Barton, 68 P Shee-han, A Read, C Rarick, H Kobayash'i (Japun), C Johnson, D Eggaling, L Davies (GB), K Albers, J Kargas, 69 M McCacorge, M Makion, J Ged-des, T Berrett, H Walton, J Zasifiz, A Soremstam (Swe), R Heithamgion (Aus), T Herson, L Hack-rey (GB); J Gelagher-Smith. Other GB: 70 H Dobson, M McKsy, 71 C Matthew 72 C McMa-Jan, J Morkey, 73 S Lowe, L Paircloud, 74 T Johnson, 75 S Spudwick, K Marshall, 78 J Moodle. Hockey

SURGOPEAN INDOOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP A Division (Hamburg) First day; Pool At Har-vestshutsh (Gar) 13 St Abena 1: Sievie Prague (Cz. Rep) 3 AZCS Pocatowiec (Pol) 6. Pool B: Dürfsharer (Gar) 15 Chert Lyngby (Den) 2; WAC Venna (Aut) 6 Lille (Fr) 10. Ice hockey

Rugby Union DAY'S LATE RESULT: Club match: of 26 Neath 45.

Snooker

Complications of the Company of the

63 6-2 LTA WOMEN'S CHALLENGER (Redbridge) Singles, quarter-finale: S Nacuk (Yug) tr. J Pulin (Suseu) 6-77-68-1; T Krizan (Stwen) tri N Feber (Bel) 2-6 6-3 6-4 Santi-finals: L Woodroffe (Sur-rey) tr. T Kozan (Stwen) 6-4 6-4; S Nacuk (Yug) tr. K Cross (GB) 6-3 7-5.

## Wenger outburst over Chelsea 'divers'

Football

By Nick Harris

Arsène Wenger yesterday risked the wrath of the Football Association by calling Arsenal's Coca-Cola Cup conquerors Chelsea tify his decisions. "experienced divers" and saying the semi-final referee Graham was "absolutely ridiculous."

Wenger, speaking in a calm and calculated manner two days after the Stamford Bridge match, revealed his sense of injustice and a daunting injury list

Reid and

the rise

IT IS live on Sky, it is the near-

Premiership derby this season.

but Leeds United's jaunt up to

St James' Park tomorrow is

not the biggest game in the

Riverside this afternoon: Mid-

dlesbrough against Sunderland.

Second in the First Division

against third. Two teams whose

combined gates topped 70,000

Boro's sell-out for their Coca-

Cola Cup semi-final return with

Liverpool was, perhaps pre-

dictable. Less so the Nationwide

League record of 40.579 who

contributed to the first lock-out

Tuesday night in February,

which saw Peter Reid's side

skate to a 4-1 win over a Read-

ing team whose travelling con-

sponse by both clubs to last sea-

son's disastrous demotion from

the Premiership has been re-

markable, and only magnified

tingent totalled 150 fans.

On and off the field th

This, remember, on a chilly

at the Stadium of Light.

in midweek.

That takes place down by the

North-east this weekend.

Robson on

Forget Newcastle, the best football in the North-east is to be found in Sunderland

est thing Newcastle have to a forced to revamp their old

and Middlesbrough. lan Potts reports

match against Crystal Palace. has collected 23 yellow cards in Organising Committee (CFO) Wenger criticised Poll, who dished out 10 yellow cards and one red on Wednesday night, and then appeared 24 hours later on a television show in which he took up an invitation to jus-

Wenger said: "I think he should have stayed at home - on Poll's dismissal of Patrick Vieira both nights. I'm very disappointed because it seemed everything went against us. We were not angels but you have to say that if Vieira was sent off then 10 other players could have gone off before and after him." He also thinks Vieira, who

With Newcastle having been

ground after objections to plans

to relocate to the nearby Town

Moor, supporters on the Tees

and the Wear can boast better

stadiums - and local pride de-

turn-out four days ago was the

biggest in the region for 17 years

and physically can't be bettered

by either of their neighbours. Fol-

lowing Boro, they have also

beaten Newcastle in launching

their own cable TV station.

More fame, of sorts, will come

Sunderland's astonishing

mands that they be filled.

less than two seasons, has become a victim of his reputation. "The first booking against

Vieira was absolutely ridiculous because for me it is a dive by [Gianhica] Vialli," Wenger said. I said to the players who had been booked before half-time that it was very important not to be involved in anything that might bring a second yellow card but it was such a physical battle and they [Chelsea] have much more experience. They

has written to the World Cup on sale.

quirement for non-residents ordering tickets to have a postal address in France.

The letter accuses the CFO of breaching the principles of free and fair competition within the EU's single market and warns legal steps will follow unless the rule is dropped within a formight. More than 60 per cent of tickets have already been sold exclusively to people living in France, but the European Commission hopes that its action will allow greater The European Commission access to any tickets remaining every day they continue with the

The Commission has also demanding that it drops a re- told the CFO that its ticket policy disadvantages anyone living outside France because the only option is to buy through agents. who are asking high prices. "There is clear discrimination. We want to see more European citizens, and not only in France,

> If the CFO decides to ignore the warning letter, the Comsystem. If that is not heeded the

Blackburn's manager, Roy Hodgson, is stepping up his move for Lazio's Pierluigi Casiraghi. Hodgson sent his assistant, Tony Parkes, to watch Castraghi against Juventus in the Italian Cup on Thursday.

Tottenham hope to complete the £2.3m signing of Moussa Saib, the 26-year-old Algerian being able to buy tickets," it said. midfielder, from the Spanish club Valencia next week. Spurs' mission will proceed to a formal manager, Christian Gross, tarstatement of objections to its geted the former Auxerre man soon after replacing Gerry Franorganisers will be fined for cis but had to wait for Saib to end his involvement with the Africa Nations' Cup.



Paul Merson (left) and Kevin Phillips are setting the pace at Middlesbrough and Sunderland

pleted the ceremonial spraying

of the dressing-room walls on

Wednesday, with a second suc-

cessive Coca-Cola Cup final

assured, than the players were

warned to leave the rest of the

enjoy the occasional party him-

self. "We all wanted to celebrate,

but they knew they had to rest

and recover in time for Sunder-

a thrilling run which has seen

"I told the lads they could

champagne on ice.

from the five episodes of Premier Passions which start on BBC1 major summer signings should unprecedented responsibility. scoured the Nationwide handnext Tuesday. It is understood not be undersold. Paul Mer-Reid's tasty team talks would make a sergeant-major blush. for provincial Boro took the candidates for the region's play-His side, like Boro, are playcountry by surprise. On a local er of the year award. ing the sort of attractive football level, though, the impact of Lee which is putting Kenny Dalglish's team in the shade. Admittedly. United do hold the

North-east's only Premier place but, by next season, all three from Newcastle. could be back on an equal foot-Both players were mediumtraumas of the last campaign.

Despite the departures of Clark's conversion from black Juninho, Ravanelli and Emer- party line, Robson has always inand white to red and white was son, manager Bryan Robson has sisted that promotion is this seasecond only to the tremors which drafted in high-profile re- son's No 1 objective. The failure have a good half bour, but that greeted Kevin Keegan's exit placements using Merson's ar- of last year's triple mission, when was it." said Robson, known to rival to tempt Andy Townsend, Wembley was attacked on two the Colombian striker Hamilton ing, with lessons learned from the large fry in a big pool, but nei-Ricard and the Italian front ously fought for Premiership ther were first choice on the man, Marco Branca. By con- survival, left too many scars.

the pair have flourished and are book to come up with 21-goal son's decision to leave Arsenal emerging as the outstanding Kevin Phillips from Watford and the classy centre-back Jody Craddock from Cambridge.

Never once straying from the fronts while the club simultane-

land, because that game is more No sooner had they comimportant than Liverpool." Without such diversions. Reid has taken Sunderland on

> them lose just one of their last 20 League games. Curiously, it is the Scouser, Reid, who has made his home on Teesside, while North-east born Robson commutes from Manchester. Yet despite the rivalry of their teams' followers, the pair remain close friends. They have been known to compare notes at a wine bar in Yarm. Tonight's ses-

### The parts played by their manager's menu. Given new, trast, Reid seems to have Moore expected to stand in for Van Hooijdonk

Tennis

WITH 26 goals to his credit this season, Pierre Van Hooijdonk is one of the key figures in Nottingham Forest's ascent to the top of the Nationwide First Division. His absence, therefore, will be keenly felt today as Forest seek to expand on their one-point lead when they visit

GREG RUSEDSKI scraped

through to the semi-finals of the

European Community Cham-

pionship in Antwerp yesterday

and then attacked Tim Henman.

Thomas Johansson 6-3, 4-6,

64 and said he was generally

happy with his form but he was

more keen to express his dis-

appointment that he had been

Rusedski beat Sweden's

For Van Hooijdonk is with the Netherlands in the United States this weekend and any hopes of Forest making it cool Britannia on their trip to the Potteries will rest largely on the shoulders of Ian Moore, in the Dutch striker's stead. Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, has Jon Olav Hielde standing by should the defender Steve Chettle fail to overcome a back injury.

the last person to know about

Henman's decision not to play

in the World Team Cham-

before I knew," he said. "I'm dis-

appointed. This might have been

the only chance for Britain to

play there. It's also great prepa-

if I could play there and even

"Last year he was asking me

ration for the French Open.

"Tim talked to the press

piouship in May.

Their opponents, currently in 19th place, will be hoping that Kyle Lightbourne has shaken off their £500,000 signing from further depleted by the loss of

pected to play on the left.

compete in this year's team

tournament in Düsseldorf be-

cause Henman has declared

himself unavailable, preferring

instead to take a week off to pre-

pare for the French Open and

the subsequent grass-court

the annual competition using

the combined rankings of each

trying to get a wild card [for nation's top two representatives. for 4-3 in the third as Johans-

Britain will not be chosen

Eight teams are selected for

season in England.

Bassett's former club, Sheffield United, travel to Birmingham tomorrow in fourth from Oxford, should make his the flu bug that threatens to rule place, just behind Sunderland debut at St Andrew's. Gary and Middlesbrough, who meet Coventry out of the game. today. Farl Barrett has extend-Stoke's striking resourses are ed his loan spell from Everton leading scorer, Paul Furlong, while Don Hutchison is still a and the midfielder Chris Marstheir top scorer. Peter Thorne. Blades player, although his ruled out with a rib injury, but move to Everton looks likely. the winger Danny Tiatto is ex- He is, though, starting a two-

No 3, Andrew Richardson, is

set in 30 minutes with a sting-

ing second serve of 134mph but

Johansson, winner of back-to-

back indoor titles last year in

burg, won the second set by

son saved one break point but

breaking Rusedski's serve.

Copenhagen and St Peters-

Rusedski earned a break

Rusedski won the opening

too far down the world list.

Darren Purse, Birmingham's new £600,000 central defender Ablett is set to return but Birmingham are still without their den, who are both suspended. The midfielder Steve Robinson returns after completing a two-

Henman's lack of consultation disappoints Rusedski

sion could be a long one.

long over the baseline. of Slovakia, 6-4, 6-4 in a semi-Another quarter-final was taken care of without a match final lasting 73 minutes. as Johansson's compatriot, In today's final, Woodroffe, Magnus Larsson, pulled out meets Yugoslavia's Sandra Nacuk, the world No 205 who before his contest with the beat Karen Cross, the third

holder, Marc Rosset, of Sweden, with an ankle problem. Britain's No 2. Lorna

The Canadian-born natu-

ralised Briton won through

lose the game.

double-faulted on the second to Woodroffe, reached the first singles final of her career at the WTA Challenger tournament at Redbridge Sports Centre, Essex, when Johansson sent a return yesterday. The 21-year-old, seeded No 2, beat Tina Krizan,

seed from Exeter, 6-3, 7-5 in 81

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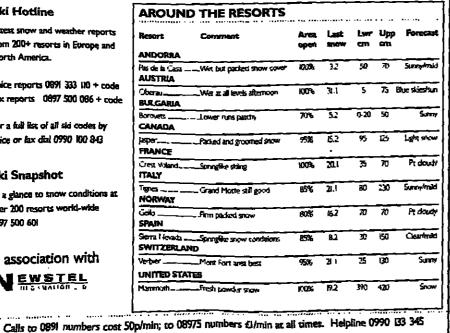
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### High-scoring Canterbury hope to extend run

Hockey

Britain will not be eligible to without Henman because their

By Bill Colwill

WITH leaders Cannock unlikely to come unstuck at Hounslow, tomorrow's main National League Premier attraction will be the meeting of second-placed Canterbury and Southgate, three points behind and third.

back since beating Cannock Wicken can be expected to 6-1 last November, having give the Southgate defence a scored 50 goals in their last 10 torrid afternoon. League games.

The Welsh coach, David trio of Stuart Humphries, they beat Surbiton 4-1.

Canterbury have not looked David Matthews and Paul

Chelmsford will be without their captain, Darren Whit-Bunvan, has moulded a fine ford, for their key Division One attacking side around the ex- game against Brooklands, who perience of the Wales captain, lead the table by one point and David Hacker, and the ever- will be hoping to repeat their green Sean Kerly. Their young success of last weekend when

### Coaches forced to sit out crucial match

Basketball

By Richard Taylor

LONDON TOWERS' challenge for the Budweiser League title is on the line at Wembley tomorrow, but their coach, Kevin Cadle, is confined to the TV commentary team alongside his rival on the night. Birming-

Americans are serving a one- Greater London Leopards in game ban for the match, after winning the title last season. berating officials in two differ- Leopards have 21 wins from 26 ent games in recent weeks. They decided to entrust coaching duties to their assistants rather than risk further punishment by appealing, and instead will sit side by side on the

television platform.

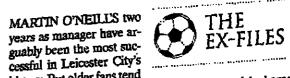
games after beating Towers 93-83 last weekend and Newcastle Eagles 100-97 in overtime on Wednesday.

Bullets have 20 wins from 25 games, ahead of Sheffield Sharks on 19 from 25 and Tow-Towers aiready have eight ers in fourth, but they cannot afham Bullets' Mike Finger. Both defeats, the same number as ford to lose another game.

### SIDELINES

### From Fulham Road to Filbert Street

history. But older fans tend



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THE GAFF TAPES

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Comments

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Football

In the horse,

niw win

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to become more misty-eyed about the flair which characterised Jimmy Bloomfield's reign in the 1970s, much of it served up by refugees from today's visitors, Chelsea.

Keith Weller, Chris Garland and Steve Kember all arrived from Stamford Bridge, while Alan Birchenall (now a PR man at Leicester) linked up after diverting to Crystal Palace. Combining with other recruits from the capital like Jon Sammels and Steve Earle, plus the distinctly un-Southern Frank Worthington, their flamboyance contrasted with the functionalism of O'Neill's team.

Weller's final goal for Leicester - scored in a pair of white tights worn for protection against the cold - symbolised the end of an era in 1979. Bloomfield had already left, yet Filbert Street continued to tap the Fulham Road connection. David Webb, who had won the FA Cup for Chelsea in 1970 and later occupied their manager's chair, was relegated in his only full season with the Foxes.

Another of Bloomfield's Cockney colony, Dennis Rofe. left for Chelsea in 1980. The same year, Hereford's Andy Feeley went on loan to Chelsea, whose failure to make the deal permanent disheartened him so much he went off to play for Trowbridge. His manager there, a certain Mr Birchenall, sold him to Leicester where he became the reg-ular right-back. Muzzy Izzet, signed by O'Neill for £800,000 from Rund Gullit, provides the "ex" factor today.

Ten things Southampton's Norwegian Ostenstad might be



His home town, Haugesund, which advertises itself in Norway as "The best in the south-west." 2 The "lovely shops, reasonable prices and god service" promised in Haugesund tourist litera-

3 Stave churches, the oldest wooden buildings on earth. Rivalled only by parts of The Dell. 4 The tantalisingly pro-

area, kiosk and toilets."

5 Brown goat's cheese.

table (covered in pickled herrings) which is erected for coastal festival days. 8 Glacier hiking in Nigardsbreen, guaranteed to be less perilous than a season at Southampton. **9** The statue of writhing bodies in Oslo's Vigeland Park. Evokes all emotions moted Etne waterfall, from unfettered joy to tonear Haugesund. "Total tal despair, not unlike height 1900 feet. Picnic watching Matt Le Tissier. 10 More fresh fish than you can shake a stick at.

which often freezes over

and the Pope once passed.

7 The world's longest

## NAME OF THE GAME No 23: PEGASUS

Famous for their extraordinary exploits in the FA Amateur Cup in the 1950s. Pegasus won it twice at Wembley in front of 100,000 crowds. The name Pegasus (winged horse) was adopted in recognition of the names of the two university clubs from which they drew membership, Oxford's Centaurs and Cambridge's Falcons. The club lasted just 15 years.





ON 19 February 1965, Chelsea's manager Tommy ture against Barnet today retheir prized striker. Tommy Knox, to Newcastle.

It did not hinder their and progressing in the they pipped Barnet to the League Cup. and a Daily . Conference post. Mirror headline even asked:

and won the League Cup. crowd of 9,432,

Lincoln's Third Division fix-Docherty stunned the foot- calls the remarkable season ball world by cooly selling the two clubs enjoyed in the GM Vauxhall Conference 10 years ago. Lincoln, haying been relegated from the progress that season. The old Fourth Division, kept a next day they beat Totten. full-time playing staff in the ham 1-0 in the fifth round of hope of winning immediate the FA Cup. They were top promotion back into the of the League at the time. League and it paid off as

Barry Fry's Barnet - who "Heck!... Why not Chelsea: were to win promotion three years later - led for seven They didn't quite win the months of the season but fallot, but it might hearten Gi-tered in the closing stages. anluca Vialli to note that : Colin Murphy's Lincoln se-Chelsea finished third in cured promotion with a 2-0 the First Division, were win at home to Wycombe semi-finalists in the FA Cup Wanderers in front of a

Loans/trials

### THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

Transfers Free transfers or undislosed lees unless stated

rice transfers or undislosed tees unless stated
Alun Amstrong (forward) Stockport to Middlesbrough (£15m);
Darren Purse (defender) Oxford
Utd to Birmingham (£60,000);
Kyte Lightbourne (forward) Coventry to Stoke (£50,000); James
Quinn (forward) Elactopool to West
Bromwich (£50,000); Kevin Francls (forward) Birmingham to Oxford
Utd (£100,000); Garry Bollam (detender) Rangers to St Johnstone
(£100,000); Andy Legg (defender)
Birmingham to Reading (£75,000);
Matthew Robinson (winger)
Southampton to Portsmouth
(£50,000); Danny Cutlip (defender)
Fulliam to Brentford (£50,000);
Jermaine Wright (forward) Wolves
to Crewe (£250,000); Simon Coleman (defender) Bolton to
Southerd; Nictly Wright (forward)
Derby to Carissie; Danny George
(defender) Nothingham Forest to
Doncaster; Hebbb Sissoko (forward) Loutans-Culseaux (Fr) to Prestor.

Loans/trials

Peter Beardstey (forward) Botton to Manchester City; Craig Liddle (defender) Middlesbrough to Darielington; Lee Briscoe (defender) Sheffield Wednesday to Manchester City; Steve Biywater (goekeeper) Rochdale to West Ham; Danny Hill (midfielder) Tottenham fo Cardiff, Bryein Gunn (goalkeeper) Norwich to Hilbernian; Steve Davis (defender) Barnsley to Oxford Utd; Stuart Elliott (defender) Newcastle to Swindon; Lee Charles (forward) OPR to Cambridge Utd; Mark Crossley (goalkeeper) Nottingham Forest to Cambridge Utd: Mark Crossley (goalkesper) Nottingham Forest to Milwali; Tony Lormor (forward) Preston to Notts County; Darram Roberts (forward) Darington to Peterborough; Zelke Rowe (forward) Peterborough to Doncaster; Steve Tutte (defender) York to Darington; Neil Woods (forward) Grimsby to Mansfield; Jim Crawford (midfielder) Newcastle to Dundee Utd; Manny Omoyinni (forward) West Ham to Dundee Utd.

Contributors: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelinas, Sports Dask, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Whari, London E14 5DL e-mail address: sport @ independent.co.uk

¥ مران ا من الاصارا

## Kidnapping the ref's wife and other guerrilla tactics win freedom



ogq

THE **GAFFER TAPES** 

FIRST, I would like to say a big in both the players' diet and the of being a government relax them. It seemed to do the he's wanted in 30 countries and absence, It took a dozen cases thank you to all the work with a stable of the finest Cuban cigars thank you to all the well-wishers who sent cards expressing their concern at my fate over the last few weeks. I'll be sending both of you a signed pho-

You might not recognise me straight away as I've had some fresh ones taken to capture my new look. A month in the Central American jungle has achieved where a decade of dieting and half-a-dozen fat farms failed. I'm down to an elfin 13st and I'll be eternally grateful to Pedro, the guerrillas' cook, for his help. His bark-and-leaf quiche and cockroach casserole were so good I'm going to incorporate them

club's pie stands.

I was a bit sorry to leave Pedro and the boys. After the first week or so, when they kept me chained to the outside toilet (convenient while I got used to the grub but you had to check under the seat for black widow spiders before relaxing), they turned out to be a decent set of lads. Football's a universal language and once I said "Bobbee Charlton" and "Tonee Cascareeno" they were

It turned out they had a team of their own and, luckily for me, needed a new manager - the old one had been tortured to death under suspicion

informer. The politics was a bit trick, though the added pretricky and my experience of caution of taking the referee's managing Manchester City a wife hostage to concentrate his few years ago came in handy not that Peter Swales went as far as pulling his managers'

fingernails out. The players were pretty useful, all they needed was some English tactical nous. Once I'd stopped their poncy passing around, stuck the biggest bloke up front and told them to hoof it at his head and play for the second ball, we were flying and reached the final of the Guevara Cup. This is a big deal in guerrilla football so, before the match, I gave them all a glass of tequila to

mind might have helped. We won 3-0 with Ruben Tuesdai, our star striker, scoring a hattrick of penalties.

They were so delighted they offered me my freedom on condition I asked Tony Blair to set up a task force to examine their gricvances. I've been to see him and pointed out that travelling in the area and asking questions is a very dangerous activity. We're hopeful David Mellor will find time to head up the

Tuesdai has come back with me. It's a bit of a problem that stabbers have been active in my

post-season tour of the USA but I'm sure he'll be a big asset. The Sludgethorpe Popular Front have offered to sponsor his kit and find a series of safe houses while we negotiate with MI6. He needs a bit of time to settle in: I had to tell him we don't go round kidnapping referees, we just get Sky TV and BBC Radio to slaughter

While I made a lot of good friends out there - and we still keep in touch through the Internet (gun.co/rebel.www) it's good to be home, especially as I understand a few back-

I don't think he'll be on the of the finest Cuban cigars from Fidel's personal collection - to persuade Sir Hirem to vacate the manager's office although I am grateful to him for sacking that traitor Kit Mann. The nine Premiership points he won to to lift us off

the bottom are handy, too. With Kit gone we are a bit light on coaching staff and I'm hoping we can come to an arrangement with Rund. We've offered him a 30-minute stint, twice weekly, at £100 a session netto. Plus he gets his own personal Gatorade bottle and can sit in the good corner of the dressing-room, the one which doesn't get flooded by the

showers. In the meantime I've asked Fritz Unstartz to be player-coach. He could be a natural. He has a voice like a town crier and can take out an entire row of tea cups with one sweep of his arm.

Not having seen the team play for a month I've had to take a bit of advice on selection. I checked out those papers that give players marks out of 10, averaged out performances. and came up with the best XI. After Fritz pointed out there was only one defender I made a few changes. Ivor Niggle and Shaun Prone were the unlucky

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

### McLeish seeks belief from his Hibernian side

HIBERNIAN'S manager, Alex McLeish, wants his new charges to shake off any feelings of selfpity when they face Rangers at Easter Road McLeish takes charge of the Premier Division's bottom club for the first time today after his move from Motherwell nine days ago.

"Hibs may be down at the bottom but I'm convinced there is enough ability in the squad to turn things around. But the players have got to want it," McLeish said.

McLeish will give a debut to the goalkeeper Bryan Gunn, who joined the club on a threemonth loan deal this week from Norwich. There could also others change to the side.

Manny Omoyimni is likely to start on the bench for Dundee United at Dunfermline after joining them on a month's deal from West Ham. The 20-year-old Nigerian-born winger has been allowed to move to Tannadice in the short term by the Hammers manager, Harry Redknapp, to build up his fitness.

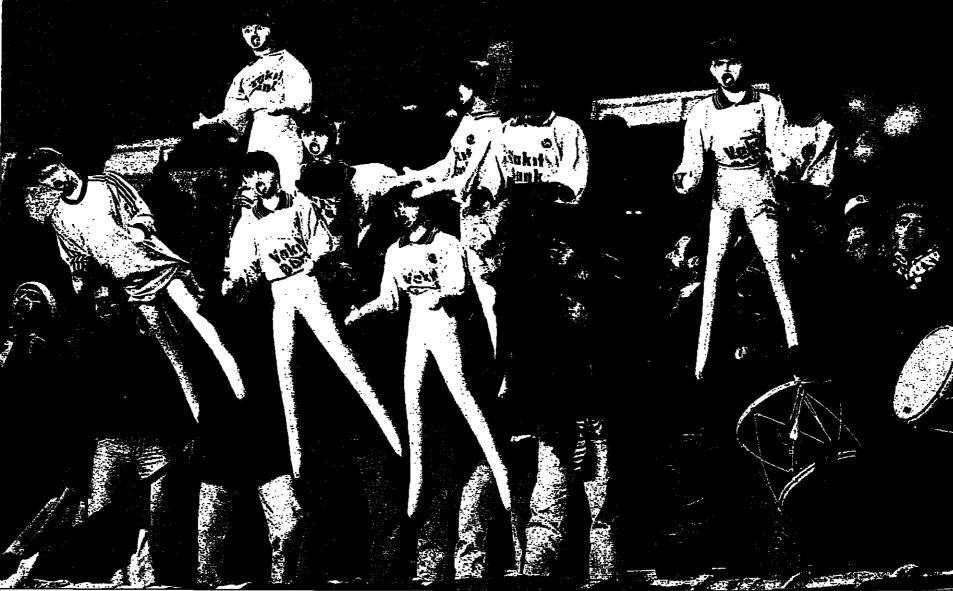
Celtic's head coach, Wim Jansen, views every game remaining this term as effectively being a cup final as his side aim for the treble of league and both domestic cups, having already won the Coca-Cola trophy.

The latest of these so-called finals sees second-placed Celtic take on Kilmarnock at Parkhead with Jansen looking for a repeat of Monday's determination and composure that brought a convincing 2-1 Scottish Cup win at Dunfermline.

"Every player needs to be really concentrated now for every match and I think they understand that is necessary as every game is a cup final for us now," the Dane said. "The way we have played recent games has been very good as we have put pressure on the opposition from the outset and that is important from our way of playing."

Today's opponents are Kilmarnock, whose manager, Bobby Williamson, hopes his side will bounce back from surrendering their hold on the Scottish a booking after hacking down Cup in a fourth-round defeat in this year's competition by Avr. "It really does not matter if we go on to win our next five league games, it won't make up for that loss." he said. "But, having said that, we know we have Spain had expressed their dis-

just got to get on with it." caretaker manager, Jim Griffin, will take charge for the first, and probably last, time at home to such a high-profile player. title-chasing Hearts.



Terrace fashion, Istanbul style: Galatasaray fans wield inflatable ladies wearing Fenerbahce shirts during the 2-2 draw between the bitter Turkish rivals last Sunday

## luninho's assailant escapes ban

THE Spanish League's Appeals Committee overturned a fourmatch ban on Thursday which had been given to the Celta Vigo defender Michel Salgado after an incident in which the former Middlesbrough player, Juninho, broke his leg.

The Committee quashed the suspension given to Salgado on Monday. Earlier this month, Salgado escaped without even the Brazilian during Celta's 1-1 draw with Atletico Madrid.

day, while players from all over Elsewhere, Motherwell's reporters felt that Salgado to Rio de Janeiro. would not have been sanctioned at all if Juninho had not been

One of the forwards who is in contention to replace the injured Some 6,000 Celta fans had Juninho in Brazil's World Cup taken to the streets of Vigo to squad, Edmundo, has carried protest against the ban on Tues- out his threat to walk out on Fiorentina if the Italian Serie A club did not guarantee him a firstagreement with the ban. Many team place, and has flown home

has been overturned.

should always be like that. If not,

football becomes a joke."

The colourful striker arrived from the Brazilian club Vasco da Gama early last month after Juninho, who returned to completing the league season

Brazil on Wednesday, looks likely to miss the rest of the Spanish season and the World Cup finals in France in June. He had voiced his support for the ban given to his assailant and will be horrified to learn that it "It should serve as an example," Juninho had said. "It

> FOOTBALL AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT **METCALF**

with Vasco, for whom he scored a record 28 goals but also received seven red cards.

"If I don't play for Fiorentina, then I'm going back to

Brazil," Edmundo said before their coach, Boris Ignatiev, said he headed home. "This year this week. there are the World Cup finals and I don't want to put them at anything about it yet," he said. risk. Italy is fine. Florence is a wonderful city and Italian football is exactly what I expected Russia's neighbours, Ukraine, - but I was promised that I

would play." After a long absence from gium and the Netherlands. the Brazilian team for disciplinary reasons. Edmundo was ian gas monopoly, withdrew its recalled for the Gold Cup in the lucrative sponsorship of the United States this month. Shortly after arriving back series of poor results. home on Thursday, he was spotted at the Salgueiro samba school, one of Rio's most popular carnival clubs.

Russia's national team, absent from the World Cup finals for the first time in 20 years, will get no more wages unless they qualify for the next European

"The players don't know "There's likely to be a difficult discussion." Both France and stand between Ignatiev's team and a place at Euro 2000 in Bel-

Gazprom, the massive Russnational team last year after a

Nigeria, banned from the African Nations' Cup in Burkina Faso, meet Jamaica in a friendly in Kingston tomorrow. The Olympic champions have recalled a striker who was one of their main men at USA '94: Rashidi Yekini, now with FC Zurich. He has not played for Championship in the year 2000, Nigeria for two years.



Tottenham's former French international forward David Ginota has admitted he has lit-tle hope of making Aime Jacquet's national squad for the World Cup finals.

"It would be truly fantastic," said Ginola when asked what said Ginola when asked what his chances were of impress-ing Jacquet, the French coach. "The player in me, that which gives everything in every match, would still love to be-lieve I could go – but the hu-man being in me has doubts. I am a reasist and if I was a bet-tion man I know it is unlikely. ting man I know it is unlikely will be in the squad.

"Of course I would love to play - and I wouldn't mind pasy ~ and i wouldn't mind someone giving me a ring from time to time," the 31-year-old added. "I have tallen back in love with my job. I am much more positive now." Rupert Metcalf

### Major weekend fixtures and pools check

TODAY 3.0 unioss stated

FA Carling Premiership 1 Arsansi v Crystal Palace. 2 Bolton v West Ham ......

3 Coventry v Barnsley 4 Leicester v Chelses..... 5 \*Liverpool v Everton ... 6 Manchester Utd v Derby. 7 Sheffield Wed v Tottenha 9 Wimbledon v Aston Villa

\*Postponed (playing Monday, Pools penel will adjudicate)

Nationwide League First Division 10 Bradiord City v Oxford Utd..... 12 Ipswich v Norwich..... 13 Middlesbrough v Sunderland ...

14 QPR v Port Vale ...... 15 Reading v Portsmouth 16 Stockport v Charlion...... 17 Stoke v Nottingham Forest ..... 18 Swindon v Manchester City ....

Second Division

21 Bristol Rovers v Oldham 22 Burnley v Brentford ..... 23 Chesterfield v Wrexham 24 Fulham v Wigan ...... 25 Glängham v Carisie ..... 26 Grimsby v Bournamouth 27 Luton v Bristol City .... 28 Milwell v Northempton 29 Preston v Wycombe ...

30 Southend v Blackpool.

33 Cardiff v Cambridge Utd.. 34 Chester v Rotherham 35 Doncaster v Torquey... 36 Exeter v Colchester 39 Lincoln City v Barnet.

 Mansfield v Darlington. Notts County v Scarborough Peterborough v Macclesi - Rochdale v Brighton ... Shrewsbury v Hartlepool

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division

40 Celtic v Kilmamock 41 Dunfermine v Dundee Utd ..... 42 Hibernian v Rangers 43 Motherwell v Hearts .

44 St Johnstone v Aberdeen ...... First Division

45 Ayr v Stirling .... 46 Dundee v Airdrie ...... 47 Morton v Raith

48 \*Hamilton v St Mirren......Off 49 Partick v Falkirk...... \*Postponed (playing Monday: Pools panel will adjudicate) Second Division

- Clydebank v Brechin... Fortar v East Fife ..... Inverness CT v Livingston - Stenhousemus v Queen of Sth

- Strannaer v Clyde ...

Third Division - Berwick v Alloa .. - East Stirling v Ross County ....

- Queen's Park v Arbroath

TOMORROW

FA Carling Premiership

Vewcastle v Leeds (4,0) . Nationwide League

### Weekend fixture guide

### TODAY

-;--

Footbali 3.0 unless sta

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE e v Morece

PA UMBRO TROPHY Third round: Altra-cham v Southport; Ashton Utd v Chel-tentran; Barrow v Northwich; Grantham v Hednestord; Hayes v Bestley; Hyde Utd v Dover; Stough v Boreham Wood; Saverage v Gloucester.

Pedressord, rayes v Bastey, representation of Coursester.

RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: Bromier v Bishop's Stortford: Degestriam & Red-bridge v Kingstonian; Enfield v Wellon & Heisfland; Gravesserd & Nordfleet v Vellon & Heisfland; Gravesserd & Nordfleet v Vellon & Heisfland; Carendard of Station: Hendron v Dulwich: Heydroge v St. Albars; Heisflan v Basingstoke; Sutton Utd v Oxford City; Yeading v Chestern, First Division: Abrigdon Town v Chertsey; Aldershot v Whyteleate; Barton v Chrydon; Berkhamsted v Graye; Bilericay v Unbridge; Hampton v Wokingham; Leyton Pernant v Bognor Regis; Maudenhead Utd v Leatherhead; Stanes v Molessy; Thams v Romford, Worthing v Wembley, Second Division: Banstead v Wilvenhoe; Bracknel v Chestran; Metropolitan Police: Bracknel v Chestran; Metropolitan Police: Bracknel v Chestran; Metropolitan Police: Barton; Northwood v Egistri, Tibru v Leghton; Borton; Barton; Metropolitan Police; Bracknel v Chestran; Metropolitan Police; Bracknel v Construit v Contribian Casualis; Kingsbury v Gasti Thurtock; Southel v Lawes; Ware v Aweley; Wingles & Finchley v Titing, United Oxford Stanley; Wanne; Chorley v Emiley; Frickley v Colwyn Bay; Garnester v Altheron; Leych Police; Spennymoor v Guster; Winstord v Schop Auckland; First Division: Brackned v Schop Park Avenue v Fluton; Belper v Great Har-

weod: Congleton v Workington; Droytsden v Gretna; Hasnogate Town v Parsley; Metock v Netherfield: Trafford v Stockshridge Pressed Streets: Whitby v Buddon; Whitley Bay v Lin-coln Utd; Witton v Worksop.

Streets: Whitby v Bucton; Whitley Bay v Lincoln Uti; Witton v Workson
DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division:
Bath v Stithgbourne; Bronsgrove v Rothwelt
Crawley v Dorchester: Forest Green v Banmorth; Gresley v Merthyr; Halesowen Town
v Nuneston; Hastings v Afterstone; King's
Lynn v St. Leonards; Selisbury v Cambridge
City, Middland Division: Bedworth v Moor
Green: Biston v Corb; Belsenat V Reddish;
Brackley v Besston; Haunds v Paget; Stepshed Dymano v Hindoley Litt; Soliful Borcogh v Racing Cale Wennick: Statford v VS
Rupby; Sutton Coldfield v Wisbech; Stoubridge v Eventum Uti. Southern Divisions:
Crancester v Weiserbowle; Clevedon v Inoubridge; Eith & Belvedere v Weston-supaiMere; Fareham v Beldock; Fisher v Brotholge;
Fest v Mergate; Havant v Darthort, Newport
IoW v Cindertorit; Winney v Yate; Weymouth
v Newport (Gwern).
WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Canterbury v Themesmend; Crockannils v Charter; Hurbridge Weits v Beckenhern;
VCD Athledic Folkestone Invites v Lordswood:
Hythe v Generald; Thortige Weits v Beckenhern;
V Sebey; Horsham YMCA v Mile Oak; Listehumpton v Peacethaven & Relscombe;
Willer SUSSOX COUNTY LEAGUE First
Division: Esistiourne Town v Mick; Halisham
v Sebey; Horsham YMCA v Mile Oak; Listehumpton v Peacethaven & Relscombe;
Socris; Satdeen Utir v Hessodox; Shoreham
v Chichester; Whitelawik v Anundel.

URLIES ON HURTED COUNTES LEAGUE
Demoker Division: Demokry Division; Charles

v Chichester, Whitehawk v Arundel.
UHL SPORT I MITTED COUNTIES LEAGUE
Pressier Divisions Bourne v Desborough; Holbeach v Stotloid: Kernpston v Buckingham.
Long Buckly v Pottor; Mirriess Backstone v
S&L Corby; St Nexts v Cogenhor, Wellingborough v Stenfort; Wootton v Spelding: Yeslay v Bynstern, League Cup third mound
replay: Northempton Spencer v Bootton Roun
completative property i scale to December Direplay: Northempton Spencer v Boston rows, SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Di-vision: Bridport v Durington; Barnstagle v Carler; Bidelord v Cripperham: Brisington v Ernore; Cherd v Backwelt Melsham v Be-tol Manor Farm; Odd Down v Taumon; Pauton v Bridgewater, Therson v Keyneham; Westbury v Mengotsfield.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Arnold v Selby; Brigg v Thackley; Curzon Ashton v North Femby; Ex-clashill v hucknet; Glasshoughton Welster v Liversedge; Hatfield Main v Denaby; Matthy v Ossett Albiom; Ossett Town v Hallam; Pick-ering v Armthorpe Weltare.

Liversedge: Hattield Mein v Denaby; Meitby v Osseti Albion: Osseti Town v Heilarn; Fickering v Armthorpe Welfare.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Atherton LR v Biackpool Rovers; Burscough v Vaundal GM; Chadderion v Prescot Cables: Gloseop North End v Atherton Collenes; Meine Road v Hastingden; Newcaste Town v Mossley; Ramabottom v Citheres; Raine Road v Hastingden; Newcaste Town v Mossley; Ramabottom v Citheres; Rissendale v Darwen; Salford v Nantwich; St Helens v Kidegrove; Warnington v Mindoms; Totton v Bournenquaft; Aerostructures v Newbury; Brodenharst v Downton; East Cower Vics v Whitchurch; Eastleigh v Christchurch; Gesport Borough v Romeign v Cower.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE; Lymington v Christchurch; Gesport Borough v Romeign; Porternouth RN v Bemerich Heisel Herlegules; Thatcham v Cower.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division; Cladion v Great Yamouth; Felenham v Suchury Town; Soham v Harwich & Parkeston; Sudbury Warnderses v Ely; Tipme v Diss; Watchurch; Soham v Harwich & Parkeston; Sudbury Warnderses v Parken; Romeign of V Sandreil Borough; Borowich v Chesselow; Bridgnorth v Sapen-Hill, Kings Northon w William v Romeign v Sudburger St Wednesled v Romeister; West Midlands Police v Rushall Olympic.

ARNOTT INSURANCE: NORTHERN LEAGUE Prest Vertice Self v Romeister; West Midlands Police v Rushall Olympic.

ARNOTT INSURANCE: NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Bedfington Briefer v Guisborough; Birgham Synthonia v Cook; Durston Federation v Seefsem Red Star; Eastington CWM v South Strakets, Jamow Hoofing v Stockhorr, Morpheil v Birgham Borough; Shidon v Durhert; Tie Lav v Northeliadon, Press & JOURNAL Height, And D LEAGUE Pora Rangers v Cove Rengers Eigin City v Deveronvelle; Huntily v Buckle Tristie; Lossenough v Rastrukers. Rothes v Passerburgh; Wick Academy v Fort William.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Bengor City v TNS
Llentsantifraid (2:30); Barry lown v Caerases
(2:0); Connah's Cusy v Rhyl (2:30); (at fiftyl);
Cornury v Fiftr (2:30); Combran v Haverfordwest (2:30); Newtown v Inter Cable-Tel
Cardiff (2:0); Portlymadog v Cerneen Bay
(2:30); Rhayeder Town v Ebbw Vele (2:30);
Weishpool v Ceemerfon Town (2:30);
Weishpool v Ceemerfon Town (2:30). BASS BISSH CUP Sadh round: Armigh City v Ards: Glenavon v Ballydare; Glenforan v Coleraine: Institute v Dungarmon Swifts; Ki-lylaugh v Crusaders (at Segview; Ballast); Lin-Votaghame, resolver Votaghamon swiss, no-lyteigh v Cheeders (at Seeview, Bedisst); In-field v Newry; Loughgel Utd v Distliery; Portadown v Omagn Town. HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF RE-LAND Preceder Division: Derny City v Stel. Land (720); Klienny City v Cork City (720).

Five NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP England v Wates (2.0) (at Intellersham) Rugby Union section of the sectio

JEWSON NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE: Herrogets v Notsingham (2:15); Leeds v Lydney; Newbury v Liverpool St Heisten; Orley v Worcaster (2:15); Rosslyn Park v Rugby (2:30); Wharsfoolse v Reeding (2:30). Two North: Hinddey v Sandal (2:30); Lichfield v Nunesten (10f); Marnester v Asparia (2:5); Preston Grasshoppers v Kendal (2:5); Sodgley Park v Barningham/Solful (2:5); Stourbridge v Weisel (2:30); Whinlighor Park v Streffield (2:30); Amo South: Bridgester v Hevent; Cheltenham v Metropolitan Police (2:30); Ciffion v Barting (2:30); Ester v Henley (2:15); Rodnuth v Tabard (2:30); Weston-super-Mare v Plymouth (12:30).

Alls LEAGUE First Division (2:30); Clontarf JEWSON NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE: Her-

v Flymouth (1230).

Alls LEAGUE First Division (2-30): Clonter of Voll Behedens: Constitution v Gerryowen; Dungermon v Terenure; Laractowne v Young Munster; Old Creecent v Beldrock College; Strannon v Dolphin; St Mary's v Ballymera. Second Division (2-30): Bective Rangers v Malone; Buccaneer v Old Wesley; Derry v DLSP; Galvegians v Montestown; Sterries v Instoners; Sunday's Well v Wanderers; UCC v Greystones. CLUS MATCHES: London Scottish v Oxford Univ (110); London Welsh v Llanesii (110).

Cricket

TOUR MATCH (First day of three): George-town: Guyarra v England (20); THIRD ONE-DAY A INTERNATIONAL: Gelle: Sri Lanka A v England A (40am). Hockey

Hockey
MEN'S EUROPEAN INDOOR CLUB
CHAMPONSHIP (Harnburg): St Albaris v
Slavia Prague (Cz Rep).
ESL SOUTH Premier; Bournemoutin v Fereham; Chichester v Eastoole; City of Portsmoutin v Bedzenham; High Wycombe v Old
Whitgrifians; Ramgarina v Anchorians; Trojans v Gore Court; Tumbridge Walts v Henne
Bay; Winbledon v Purlay.
DTZ MEDLAND Premier: Biospormied v Hurborne; Edipassion v Northempton Sainte;
Khelsa v Blocwich; North Statford v Coventry & North Warwick; Nottingham v North
Notte; Chon & West Warwick v Hampton-InArden.
ADNAMS EAST Premier; Ciacton v Bishook

Notis, Oton & West Warwick v Hampton-InArden.

ADMAMS EAST Premier: Clacton v Bishopis
Stortford; Colchester v Cambridge Unix: Ipswich v Cambridge City, Luian Town v Sudbury; Peterborough Town v Crostyx.

WEST OF EMGLAND & SOUTH WALES
Premier: Beth Buccs v Whitehurch; Clevedon v Cheltenham; Exeter Univ v Robinsons;
Swenses v Bristol Univ; Burton Vale v Weston-auper-Mare.

NORTH First Division: Chester v Durham
Univ; Formby v Southport; Herrogate v Nestor; Norton v Ben Rhydding; Sheffield
Barkers v Wigan; Timperley v Swaltwell

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier:
lowich v Otton Tempeuss (120); Sough v
Doncester (20); Surton Colchield v Highsown
(130); Troins v Cithon Soottish Life (130).
First Division: Braderel v Loughborough Studerta (20); Canterbury v Sursoerland Bedens
(120); Chelmsford Highway v Bradford Switharborik (2.5); Lalcoster v Wimbledon (130).
Second Division: Bushers v West Winney
((10); Ealing v Woking (130); Old Loughtonans v Aufolg (10); Poynton v Shrenood (145).

WOMEN'S SOUTH Premier: Dufvich v
Horsham; Hamsteed & Westmirster v Tute 
Hit; Malderhead v Hendon; Winderster v
Roading: Winderson Hill v Southsampton

WOMEN'S NORTH First Division: Blacktum
v Winnington Park; Chester v Leyland Motors; Livepool Setton y Weiton;

WOMEN'S EAST Premier: Deretem v Ashford; Ipswich v Cambridge City; Sevenoeke v Herieston Magples; Welwyn Carden City v St Albans. WEST WOMEN'S Premier: Bournemouth v Yatis; Chetenham v Taumton Vale; Colwall v Rediand; Exmouth v Exeter; St Austall v Leomhister.

ROYAL AL-FAISAL WOMEN'S MIDLAND Premies: Crimson Rambiens v North Steffs; Kettering v Hempton- in-Arden; Luton v Belper, Pickwick v Leicester. peaper, Pickwick V Encepts THREE COUN-TRYSPORTS WOMER'S THREE COUN-TRES First Division: Milton Keynes v City of Oxford; Milton Keynes its v Farnhern Com-mon; Oxford Hawks v Newbury; Oxford Univ. v Herley; Ranalagh v Maidenhead; Reading v Windsor; Somning v Wycombe Rye; West Witney v Bracknell.

Baskethall BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Derby Storm v Was-ford Royals (730); Manchester Glents v Chester Jets (730); Thames Valley Tigers v Worthing Bears (80).

ice hockey SUPERLEAGUE: Basingstoke Blaon v Not-tingham Parathers (6.30); Bracknell Bees v Cardiff Devils (6.0); Sheffield Steelers v Man-

Other sports BOXING: Professional Promotion (Waterfront Hall, Belfast). RALLYING: Mobil 1 British Championship (Sil-SNOOKER: Scottish Open (Aberdeen).

TOMORROW

Football DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Ashford Town v Atherstone (20) HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Bohamisms v Finn Herps (3:25).

Rugby League PERST DIVISION: Devisbury v Swinton (30); Featherstone v Hull Kingston Rovers (330); Keightey v Welkefield (30); Leigh v Whiteraven (30); Widnes v Rochdale (30). Rugby Union

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP TWO: West Harrispool v Omel (20) CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER CUP Crustre-finat: Lulcester v London Insh (30). TENMENTS PREMIERSHIP Third Division (3.0): Abordeen GSPP v Gordoniens: Agr v Stewarts Meiville FP: Grangemouth v Glenrothes; Hillnead/Lordanhill v Stewartry. Hockey

Hockey

MEN'S EUROPEAN NDOOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (Hamburg): Final placings.

MATOMAL LEAGUE Premiler: Bartord
Tigers v Feading (20): Beaston v Oid
Loughtoniens (20): Canterbury v Southquas

(10): East Grinshad v Donesser ([230],
Guilditord v Feddington (Broadwest School,
Godalming 1230): Hourslow v Cannock (20),
Finst Division: Bromley v Bournville (10):
Brooklands v Chelmstord (20): Hampstead

& Westminster v Glouesser City (1230):
Harisston Megpes v Loughborough Sudents
(20): Lawes v Firebrands (130): Oxford
Haskey less (20): Oxford Univ v Busharts
(230: Stourport v Hull (130): Surbiton v Inden Gymidnan (230): Warnington v Sheffeld
(130)

WOMEN'S NORTH First Division: York v Shaffield Basketball

SUDWEISER LEAGUE: Chaster Jets v Thames Valley Tigers (730); Crystal Palace v Greater London Leopards (80); Leinesser Piders v Newcastle Eagles (80); Shelfield Stracks v Manothester Gents (80); London Towers v Elmingham Bullets (80); London

Ice hockey SUPERLEAGUE: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Shatfield Steelers (630); Carolff Devils v New-castile Cobras (630); Manchester Storm v Bracknell Bees (63).

Other sports SNOOKER: Scottsh Open (Ab

### First Division Birmingham v Sheffield Utd (10)

### QUOTES OF THE WEEK

 ! W!LL not be making revolution. That would be stupid. Gianiuca Vialli, Chelsea's new player-manager, on taking over from Ruud Gulft.

■ NO ONE stabbed Rudi in the back, not the staff or the players. This has come from the board. Viaili.

● DEATH comes quick now in football. Kevin Keegan, former manager of Newcastle United, on Gullit's sacking.

 WE have the highest paid team in the country the players Ruud Gullit brought in. I can halve the cost of season tickets tomorrow if that's what the fans want, but then they will have to put up with free transfers from the Nationwide League. Ken Bates, Cheisea chairman, on his club's massive rise in season ticket prices.

## Wilkins revels in the winning game

The fulcrum of Fulham's footballing renaissance is bonding both old and new at the Cottage, he tells Glenn Moore

IT IS a crisp morning in south-west London. A minute ago Ray Wilkins had grabbed hold of the base of a cast-iron goal and helped lug it into position on the dewy grass. Now he is standing chatting to an expensively dressed Brazilian, an agent seeking a trial for a promising teenage compatriot.

Welcome to Fulham, not yet a Premiership side, but not your average Nationwide League Second Division club either. Six months after Mohamed Al Fayed took over, and five months after he brought in Kevin Keegan and Wilkins, the club is still suffering from schizophrenia.

It is not just the incongruous scene at the training ground which, being hired from and shared with the BBC Sports Club, has a hockey pitch and a cafeteria in which players lunch alongside twin-set-andpearls ladies. It is also the oddity of the division's most expensive team, playing in a dilapidated ground, watched by a support still struggling to let go of the cosy "we're crap and we don't mind" image.

"There is a lot of that about," admitted Wilkins after training. "Well, I mind and I think everybody else on my staff minds," he added, his brown eyes and smooth voice taking on an edge that is otherwise absent from the conversation. "We want to be a friendly club but we don't want anyone to beat us. We are in the results game and I won't be here if we don't win. I love being here, so I want us to win."

Wilkins and Keegan were also greeted warily when they arrived because of the sudden axing of the previous manager, Micky Adams. Have the fans now warmed to Wilkins? "I don't really know. As far as I'm concerned I'm here to do a job. Not everybody likes you - we would all like people to love us but that isn't the case. They will have their preference. That part of it doesn't really bother me. All I'm concerned about is making sure we function as a side and give them enjoyment.

Winning helps but playing a bit of attractive football goes a long way well. The club has a tradition of playing football, therefore it is important that we try and play along the floor.

"People say you can't pass your way out of this division but you can. Crewe did it. Before losing at Oldham last Saturday we went nine games undefeated by playing football. We have worked as hard as the opposition, then our football has come into it and we have won comfortably at times - sometimes away from home. It took a while to convince the players, it always does there are so many people putting negatives in their heads."

That was merely one of the problems with the players. A glance around the car park shows up the disparity in dressing-room income. Last season's Third Division promotion-winning team was largely



built on free transfers. Now Fulham been "tough". To help the process, are spending £2m on one player first team and reserves train together, (Chris Coleman from Blackburn). either in the entire 31-man squad or Saturday's team had just three players inherited by Wilkins of whom only one, Matty Lawrence, was in the

promotion team. Many others remain, playing reserve team football, and Wilkins admitted bonding new and old had

as defenders, midfielders and forwards. Group lunches have helped as have the day-to-day trappings of Al Payed's investment, such as more

luxurious accommodation and travel for away games. However, Wilkins

playing in the first team than having a trouser press in their hotel room.

Training did suggest a happy club, however, and Wilkins added: "We've tried to treat everybody with the same respect and give everybody a chance. We still have players who were here when we arrived. They are all very happy, they work their socks admits that some would prefer to be off and it is nice to know if someone

is injured I have no qualms whatsoever putting someone in. I have seen some improvement in every player at the club and that is down to them

being prepared to work hard." The coaching aspect of the job is what drew Wilkins, sacked by Queen's Park Rangers after they were relegated, back to management when he could have settled for tele-

vision punditry, advertising and suchlike. "The bit I enjoy is getting out there with the lads. You still think you can play [he won 84 England caps and his clubs included Manchester United, Chelsea, Milan and Rangers]. I can't, but it is nice to get out there and pitch yourself against

"We are in the winning game and

I want to win but I get an enormous kick out of seeing people improve, seeing them do something on a Saturday that you might have done on the training ground with them. It shows that what you say is being taken on board." Wilkins does more coaching than

he did at QPR but does little else differently. "The hardest thing there was that I was working with a group of mates - they were team-mates a few months before. I sincerely hope Gianluca Vialli handles that side of it at Chelsea because I found it a problem. They were my friends and suddenly you have to go in and boss them. I very seldom bollock people. I prefer to talk to them but even that was difficult. However, judging by last [Wednesday] night he'll do very well."

Wilkins and Keegan are doing well themselves, too. Fulham, who host Wigan today, have risen to the play-off places which are being keenly contested behind the leaders, Watford, and Bristol City. That pair look certain for automatic promotion but have stumbled recently and Wilkins insists they can be caught. "We have to be ready. It has been a problem getting players to drop down to this division but it does give them extra impetus to make sure we get out. That has been a real plus in the dressing-room. Before games, they really are quite hyped

Given that Fulham have spent the vast sum, at this level, of £5m on players few Second Division fans want to see Fulham succeed. "There is a lot of resentment on opposition terraces but they only have to look around at the stadiums they are playing in: there are a lot of £6m stands in this division. We have put the money on the field. Our stadium is an old stadium but supporters don't mind getting wet through if the team is winning. If we get where we want to - and Fulham can be a Premiership club - we will probably build a new stadium [on the same site] but initially we will invest on the field."

This argument ignores the economics of stand-building, heavily financed by Football Trust grants, against team-building but Al Fayed's investment is not just short-term. Fulham are searching for their own training ground and expanding their youth system to, ideally, include an academy.

This, and the proposed new ground, is all part of Kevin Keegan's mandate as chief operating officer but he still gets involved on the training ground. Earlier, he had taken Peschisolido aside for an intensive session and Wilkins said: "He does a lot of individual bits with players and they have benefited from it.

"Kevin has an overall look on the club. Obviously we discuss the transfer situation, players coming in and going out, but I pick the side and, with [former QPR manager] Frank Sibley, deal with the first team."

Wilkins' contact with Al Fayed has been limited to a handful of meetings but he noted: "He comes to the home games, he's starting to enjoy himself and that is important for him. He's had a very, very difficult period: there has been a lot on his mind. Now he's enjoying his football, it's a break for him, and that's a bit of

## Get back to where you once belonged

IF MY knowledge of music serves me right, and it was better than most of the play-Odvssey who sang about packing up their boots and going back to their roots, then they must have had an insight into the mentality of footballers.

Because as much as football likes to portray itself as a forward-thinking industry, it also likes to keep one boot planted firmly in the past by looking back nostalgically in the misguided hope of being able to recreate former glories, conveniently forgetting the old adage that things are seldom as good the second time around.

That said, there are exceptions that prove the rule. Going back is OK, for instance, if you are Steve Claridge and were released prematurely by your hometown club as a teenager when Alan Ball was in charge.

Going back is probably OK if you are Alan Ball and you took Portsmouth down last time (Ball admittedly got Pompey promoted to the top flight in the first place, but it was short-lived to say the least) so things cannot really get much worse this time.

Can they? Going back is OK, too, if you are Peter Beardsley and were to all intents and purposes being put out to grass at St James' Park

(although Beardsley was still ers Kenny Dalglish has put out onto grass at Newcastle).

And if you are Graeme Le Saux and have metamorphosed from unconvincing winger into roaming full-back while you were away. And going back is definitely

OK if you are Julian Dicks and should never have gone away from Upton Park in the first place. Dicks, whose spell at Liverpool was short and not at all sweet, is not nicknamed the terminator for nothing. However, going back was

not OK for Dicks' erstwhile team-mate, Tony Cottee. Cottee says that when he left West Ham he never thought he would be back.

"I felt I had done as much as I could there and that I was going to a big club where I would score lots of goals and win the Championship and play for England," he says, which would have been alright had Cottee not chosen to sign for Everton.

But while he described his return as "coming home", others saw it differently, the Hammers fanzine calling Cottee "a poor shadow of the once prolific doyen of Upton Park". Similar sentiments could be

applied to Jürgen Klinsmann,

who started the rot this season.



BLAIR ON PLAYERS WHO RETURN TO THEIR OLD HUNTING

**GROUND** 

The German's prodigal sonlike return to White Hart Lane was the best thing to have happened to Spurs all season, but that says more about the club's season than about Klinsmann's form.

The fact he had recently been substituted at Sampdoria in favour of, er, Daniele Dichio should have been enough of a clue; as it is, his impact at Spurs has been minimal - no dive, no bicycle kick; one goal in seven games, a few nice touches and another horrific

No, the first time was always going to be the sweetest. for sure. That's something

Gough would do well to re- him in good stead. For City's member. Wright claimed recently that he would not mind ending his days at Crystal Palace, a statement which smacked more of him realising his Highbury honeymoon is nearing its end than of any overwhelming affection for his former south London club.

Gough, meanwhile, won nine consecutive League titles with Rangers before pledging his future to Kansas City Wizards. That future lasted just three months, until Gough was persuaded to return to a Rangers side that looks a patch on its former self: struggling to contain the challenge of Hearts at the top of the table, and with hardly a Scotsman in sight. Ten-in-a-row will be more of a struggle than

nine ever was. Then of course there is Howard Kendall, back for a third spell at Everton, who had previously sacked Joe Royle (where he was cast in the role of saviour of the club he used to play for) because he wasn't up to the job.

Now Royle has reappeared at Maine Road, cast in the role of saviour of the club he used to play for. (Any minute now and he will be bringing in a former City defender as his assistant.) Perhaps Royle thinks good as the original.

Ian Wright and Richard being an ex-Blue will stand sake let us hope so, but it was not much of an advantage to Peter Reid in the long run.

And it is doubtful to be much of an advantage to Diego Maradona should he eventually claim the role of Napoli's president player/ manager he is rumoured to covet so much.

Maradona is still a legend in Napoli, whom he inspired to two Scudetti, one Uefa Cup (in 1989) and one Italian Cup. But the club have gone

through three managers this season, have won just two games and are rock bottom of Serie A. They need a miracle, never mind Maradona, to save them now. Perhaps the secret is nev-

er to leave in the first place, although that is unrealistic in a game as transient as football and anyway, Matt Le Tissier is proof that you only truly learn to fly by spreading your wings. Unless you are Steve Bull, that is.

But football players and managers tend to be fairly insecure people who in times of need will always gravitate towards their former successful stamping grounds. They would do well to realise that cover versions are seldom as with the big arse.

### Fall and rise of princes of wails

MATCHDAY mornings were a magic day for me as a kid. On waking I'd leap out of bed and test the stretchability of my 100 per cent polyester nightwear by releasing a stinging shot on an imaginary ball in the style of Tommy Tynan, the greatest striker this country has ever seen.

Every League club has their striker hero, and from the late 1970s to 1983 Tommy was the King of Somerton Park and Newport County. That was when Newport were lower League; 10 years down the line the words "non-League" now appear before my team's name - although this change of circumstance, and of name, was a full decade

of misery away at this stage. I clearly remember my first game and on that day grandly announcing to my grandfather (like my father, a lifelong County fan) that I was going to Newport County Stadium, only for them to exchange guffaws. This was my first inkling that all was not what I thought it may be.

I was not disappointed when I got there. We held Grimsby Town 1-1 that magic day and I was in awe at being in the middle of a group of grown men while being allowed to hear them swear and pretend to understand their jokes about the centre-half

These first few years of life as a County fan were spent in a blind state of innocence, made easier by promotion from the old Fourth Division in my second season (1979/80) on top of winning the Welsh Cup.

Football life was one big adventure and as a consequence of our Cup victory we had a European adventure to enjoy. Following the disposal of the custodians of the Irish and Norwegian cups we were drawn against the East Ger-

> FAN'S EYE VIEW NO 245 **NEWPORT AFC** BY ANDREW

HUMPHRIES man side Carl-Zeiss Jena, In East Germany our brave lads got a draw and we were confident for the second leg. But they beat us 1-0.

We murdered them that night and everyone lost count of the number of goalline clearances they made. Only the absence of a Russian linesman stopped us getting the goal that would have taken us to the Stadium of Light and a semi-final with Benfica. At the final whistle my chubby cheeks burned with

innocence at an end.

Not long afterwards, our fortunes took a turn for the worse and, to cut a long, sad story short, we had to resort to not only selling our best players to survive, as had always been the case, but also our worst players. We sold the ground, the tea urn, the reserve team kit and club cat, all in a bid to boost the club's coffers. All to no avail.

In the final years we went through more demotions than a sergeant caught in bed with the colonel's wife.

But from the ashes of the County came a new team. The imaginatively named Newport AFC came and stole my heart. Through several years of promotion, relegation, being exiled to England by the Welsh FA and having Somerton Park demolished they have come through with flying colours. Well, drifting colours anyway.

Premiership supporters would not recognise this other world. In our league, away tans can be counted on one hand and the only queues are for the burger van when the onions have cooked. But we've got back our pride and our ambition, we're alive and can show worried supporters of the likes of Doncaster and Brighton that life can go on after humiliation and despair.

الملذا من الاصل

## Chasing pack not yet pursuing a lost cause

The destination of the Premiership is not yet a foregone conclusion, says Phil Shaw.

THE sight of Manchester any of their number to start United looking down on the mentally conceding the title. entire Premiership, seven points clear with less than a third of the season remaining. is a persuasive argument for the view that their rivals are now

garded as the best of the rest. The late Billy Bremner once wrote a book titled You Get Nowt For Being Second, which is of course no longer true. The runners-up place now brings participation in the lucrative European Champions' League and is therefore nai 15 minutes. not to be sniffed at. But despite the collective failure of Liverpool, Chelsea, Blackburn and Arsenal to take advantage of United's poor run since Christ-

Alex Ferguson suggested after United's 2-0 win at Aston Villa in midweck that the champions' performance had been playing for the right to be retheir best since Boxing Day, with victory at Cheisea. That may have been true, yet only in the context of their sub-standard displays against Coventry, Southampton, Leicester, Bolton and Barusley. It could not disguise the fact that United were desperately ordinary until the fi-

> Today, with that important win behind them and back at Old Trafford, another three points might appear to be a for-

while Nick Harris (below) gives a match-by match analysis of the weekend's action points towards a Uefa Cup

berth, means it is likely to be another uncomfortable afternoon for Ferguson. Derby have won on three of their last four visits to United - the most recent success coming last spring when Paulo Wanchope sprung to national

Smith's management. The match brings together two exponents of "squad rota-tion", the fashionable phrase which figured prominently in

fame - and have not lost in the

clubs' three meetings under Jim

mention their pressing need for European Cup in mind, Fer- with the Dutch squad to the match as Gullit's successor beguson has rested key players. Now, with virtually a full pool to choose from, he is likely to

> Smith held back Francesco Baiano last weekend, although he is surely too influential not to play today. For Arsène Wenger, juggling resources is a necessity.

send out his strongest side.

Because of injuries and international calls, the Arsenal manager is having trouble finding 11 fit men for the home fixture with Crystal Palace. Even Dennis Bergkamp, whose fear mality. However, Derby's reports of Ruud Gullit's of flying meant he stayed behind mas, it may be premature for record against United, not to demise at Chelsea. With the when Marc Overmars went

United States, is struggling.

It is hardly the ideal preparation for two meetings with Palace in four days (the second is Wednesday's FA Cup replay) which could well define Arsenal's season. Despite the Coca-Cola Cup exit at Stamford other in their match in hand. would leave them at worst

After the excitement of taking Chelsea to Wembley in his first match in charge, Gianluca Vialli comes down to earth at Leicester. There is a symbolic symmetry to the Italian's first

three points behind United.

ing at Filbert Street. It was there, 18 months ago, that he found himself relegated to the bench for the first time.

On that occasion, Viaili came on after half-time and scored immediately. Today, in the absence of Ed de Goey, he Bridge, a win today, plus an- must choose between Dimitri Kharin and Kevin Hitchcock for the goalkeeper's jersey, know-ing the Russian has already stated his intention to leave if he does not regain his place.

Blackburn's challenge continues at Southampton, where they last won 60 years ago. They will be thankful not be facing

the injured Kevin Davies, whose scoring exploits have catapulted him into the £4m class since Graeme Souness bought him for £750,000 in his last act as the Saints' manager.

Sheffield Wednesday and Tottenham, both under new management since they met last autumn, reconvene at Hillsborough, although the former home manager David Pleat will not be present. He will instead watch a European target in his new capacity as Spurs' director of football.

His successor at Wednesday, Ron Atkinson, previously held Pleat's current title at Coventry. The past two months have made it clear why the Sky Blues felt they could cope without him. Gordon Strachan has made

such spectacular progress that it will rank as a major upset if Barnsley end 75 years without a win at Highfield Road.

Strachan, whom Chelsea's new player-manager cited with Ferguson and Wenger as the three to whose standards he aspired, must decide whether to restore the snip of the season, George Boateng, after the £250,000 midfielder's absence with the Dutch Under-21s.

As the man who once said that if he had made Eric Cantona's remarks about sardines and trawlers, people would have thought he was "just a wee Scottish burn talking crap", we can safely assume that Strachan will not be discoursing on the merits or otherwise of squad rotation.



The state of the s

### Arsenal v C Palace

Leading scorer

Arsenal's injury problems mean teenage centre back Matthew Upson will get his second Premiership start and youngsters Isiah Rankin and Jason Crowe may also be in contention for places. Tony Adams and Chris Wreh are both serving bans while winger Marc Overmars is in America with the Dutch national squad. David Seaman and Ian Wright are still out injured and midfielder Ray Parlour is ruled out with harnstring trouble. Dennis Bergkamp, Nigel Winterburn and Gilles Grimandi all face late fitness tests after the Coca-Cola Cup defeat at Chelsea in mid-week. Martin Keown returns to the squad. Crystal Palace manager Steve Coppell adds strikers Marcus Bent and Matt Jansen to the squad which drew at Arsenal in the FA Cup last weekend. Both recent signings were cup tied last week but Bent has a good chance of making the starting line-up tomorrow, Jansen picked up a dead-leg in a reserve game earlier this week and is doubtful



### **Bolton v West Ham**

to make his debut. Michele Padovano and Attilio Lombardo are at

least a week away from returning, while Neil Shipperley and Paul

Warhurst will not start training for another three weeks.

Last season: No fecture

Bolton will be without Scott Sellars, who begins a two-game ban today. Manager Colin Todd will decide between John Sheridan and Michael Johansen for the vacant position. Striker Dean Holdsworth will return after a 12 week absence with knee and calf injuries to replace Bob Taylor who has returned to West Bromwich after a month's loan with the Wanderers. Scott Taylor has returned after a loan spell with Rotherham. Bolton will be hoping to produce a performance on a par with the one that gave them a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford a fortnight ago as they look for a first Premiership win

since I December. West Harn manager Harry Redknapp will give late fitness tests to John Moncur and Tim Breacker who both have groin problems. Paul Kitson is definitely ruled out with a similar injury but David Unsworth returns to the side after a harnstring problem. Both Samassi Abou and Steve Lomas are suspended with extra one-match bans imposed by the Football Association for laying hands on referees as they were being sent off in previous games.



### Coventry v Barnsley

Leading scorer Last season: No fixture

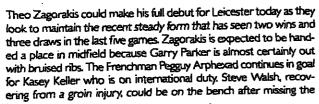
Gordon Strachan has selection dilemmas as Coventry look for a club record six-match winning sequence. Paul Telfer, Richard Shaw and George Boateng are all available again and Strachan has to decide whether to recall them. If Shaw plays, Dion Dublin will be moved from his emergency defender role back up front Boateng returns from Dutch Under-21 duty and Telfer is back from suspension. Strachan may be reluctant to make sweeping changes from the team

which won at 2-1 at The Dell in midweek. Barnsley manager Danny Wilson has defensive problems. Arjan de Zeeuw (groin) and Ales Krizan (knee) are doubtful starters and Chris Morgan and Darren Barnard are suspended. Peter Markstedt is likely to be given his first start for five weeks and Scott Jones is added to the squad, Striker lan-Age Fjortoft should replace John Hendrie up front after being cup-tied, although the Scot is also struggling with a calf strain. Wilson, meanwhile, is currently involved in talks with four players - De Zeeuw, Jovo Bosancic, Clint Marcelle and Neil Thompson'- who are all out of contract at the end of the season.



### Leicester v Chelsea

Leading scorer



last two games. Chelsea goalkeeper Kevin Hitchcock will make his first Premiership start in a year as the Blues aim to keep up championship pressure on Manchester United. Hitchcock's last league start came against United on February 22 last year, but with Ed De Goey away on international duty he will play at Filbert Street. Player-manager Gianluca Vialli may put himself on the bench after the exertions of the midweek Coca-Cola Cup win over Arsenal, with Tore Andre Flo coming in. Eddie Newton is in contention for a place as well, while Frank Šinclair (calf) remains doubtful.



### Man Utd v Derby

Manchester United will be without Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who has failed to recover from the virus which has kept him out for two games, and Ronny Johnsen, who is ruled out by a calf strain. Alex Ferguson has otherwise a virtually full squad from which to select his team. England midfielder Paul Scholes is available after a two-match suspension during which he had treatment on an injury picked up on international duty. The champions will be looking to build on their

2-0 midweek win over Aston Villa and recover from the poor form that had seen just one win in five games prior Wednesday. Francesco Baiano returns to Derby's attack. The £1.5m summer signing from Fiorentina was rested at Everton last Saturday. "He was looking a bit tired and I thought he needed a break," said manager Jim Smith. "The foreign players find it hard at this stage of the season because every game in this League is physically and mentally hard." Baiano replaces Ron Willems, and, with the Danish defender Jacob Laursen out for two weeks after keyhole surgery on his right knee, Gary Rowett again plays in central defence.

### ...And statistics

### Kendall aims to extend Everton's record



After the disappointment of their Coca-Cola Cup exit on Wednesday, one of the last things Liverpool needed was a Merseyside derby. On Monday, however, Everton visit Antield in the Premiership, bringing with them a remarkable recent record in focuses between the two sides.

While Liverpool have enjoyed much more success overall than their neighbours in recent years. Everton are unbeaten in their last seven Premlership Merseyside derbies. Since Roy

129

Strice 1997 26

Roy Evans' Anfield record

Evans won his first Premiership derby match in charge of Liverpool - a 2-1 victory at Anfield in March 1994 - he has failed to win any of the subsequent seven.

The one crumb of statistical consolation for Liverpool Is that Howard Kendali, now in his third reign at Goodlson Park, has lost his last four league derbies against Liverpool at Articld: the most recent was in his second spell and the previous three were in his first.

1.29

1,08

Points average

1.33

28

Since 1994 160 276 1.72

19 6 4 9 19 30

4 71 4 7 3 7 2 6 7 7 10 2

Evans' record in Merseyside League derbies

Kendall's record in Merseyside League derbies

The problem for Everton supporters is The three reigns of King Kendall at Goodison Park that Merseyside derbies are about the

only area of the game in which they can claim superiority over their old rivals these days. Since Everton's championship in 1987, Liverpool have always finished above their rivals. Even the Joe Royle-inspired revival of two seasons ago saw Everton finish three places

below Liverpool. Goodison fans hooing that Kendali can lead the club back to the good times enjoyed during his first spell, when Everton won the championship twice, will not be encouraged by the statistical analysis of his three reigns. Everton's average number of points per game has dropped from 1.79 in his first spell to 1.33

in his second and 1.08 in the third.



### FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

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ĮQ:	Bolton	25	23	-12	3	1.	<b>:2</b> -	.10	.12	1		-8	-D	.29	- CODLD	I Mar Sychology D. J. Har Language (A)
20	Barnsley	25	22	-39	4	3	_5_		22	2		10	8	39	WLWLD	28 Feb Wimbledon (H): 7 Mar Blackburn (A): 14 Mar Southempton (H): 28 Mar Liverpool (M).

### Sheff Wed vTottenham

Striker Andy Booth is Ron Atkinson's only injury doubt for today. Booth has suffered with a persistent groin strain which has kept him out of his side's last two matches, although, if passed fit, Atkinson is certain to keep faith with the Italians Paolo Di Canio and Benito Carbone up front Midfielder Graham Hyde, meanwhile, is on the brink of a second suspension as he has picked up seven yellow cards from 16 matches and a booking tomorrow will see him given a two match ban.

Tottenham, with eight players still out injured, are also without the suspended Ramon Vega and Stephen Clemence. David Howells is back after recovering from a cracked rib and Colin Calderwood will move to his favoured defensive role in place of Vega. Gary Mabbutt will be on the bench again alongside young reserves Peter Gain and Mark Arber, who have no first team experience. Left back Clive Wilson is the latest injury victim, failing a fitness test on a calf strain yesterday and Justin Edinburgh, who substituted for him in the I-I draw with Leicester last week, gets his first start for six weeks.



Last season: 2-0
Southampton's leading scorer Kevin Davies will not be making his comeback today. The 20-year-old striker has been struggling with an ankle injury since he limped off against Manchester United last month shortly after scoring the winning goal. Davies played against Liverpool but broke down midway through the first half and failed to recover in time to face Coventry in midweek. Saints are also without suspended centre back Ken Monkou, who begins a two-match ban, but Francis Benali returns after missing three games through

Chris Sutton is out of Blackburn's side. The striker, who has scored 16 goals this season, has failed to recover from a virus infection which has confined him to bed over the past 24 hours. Youngster James Beattie and Swedish forward Martin Dahlin will compete for his place alongside Kevin Gallacher. Dahlin, back after from injury, is most likely to step into Sutton's place. The Swiss central defender Stéphane Henchoz and the Norwegian centre-back Tore Pedersen are both

### Wimbledon v Aston Villa

jamaica striker Marcus Gayle is likely to return to Wimbledon's tuam against Aston Villa at Selhurst Park on Saturday after returning from international duty at the Gold Cup in America. Wimbledon will also be hoping Gayle's fellow Jamaican international, midfielder Robbie Earle, who missed the America trip, will be fit to return, while midfielder Ceri Hughes also hopes to return after a hamstring injury. Efan Ekoku may play a part following a lengthy recent lay-off with ankle ligament trouble. Wimbledon have won one Premiership game

in the last five. Aston Villa's transfer-listed striker Savo Milosevic could keep his place today. The Yugoslav international was recalled for the midweek 2-0 defeat against Manchester United in the absence of Dwight Yorke. Yorke is one of five players trying to regain fitness as he struggles to shake off a calf strain. Midfielder Mark Draper has an ankle problem, while Steve Stauriton is struggling with a harrstring strain. Gareth Southgate suffered a thigh strain against United, while midfielder lan Taylor picked up an ankle injury.

### TOMORROW **Newcastle v Leeds**

Leading scorers Last season: 3-0



Kenny Dalglish is only without long-term injury victim Steve Watson. Dalglish admits his side deserved to lose 4-1 at Elland Road in October - but he is confident his side can turn the tables on the Yorkshiremen at St James' Park this weekend. Both Andreas Andersson and full-back Andy Griffin are both available after missing last Saturday's Cup tie with Tranmere - the Swede was injured, while the former Stoke defender was Cup-tied. Newcastle need a win to have any chance of moving back into the top half the table, while their visitors need a win to maintain their challenge for a place in Europe. Leeds midfielder David Hopkin returns to captain the side for tomorrow's game after pulling out of last week's FA Cup fifth round home win over Birmingham due to a family bereavement. Hopkin will take the place of Lee Bowyer, who starts a two-match suspension for an accumulation of bookings, while Mark Jackson completes a two-game ban. Defender Robert Molenaar is again doubtful with a knee injury, while David Robertson (knee) and Derek Lilley (hernia) are both out for the next few weeks following surgery.

FAIR PLAY LEAGUE	UNFAIR PLAY LEAGUE
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	1 Coveritry26 5 51 76 292
1 G Polt15 7 80 85 633	, ,
2 M Reed13 2 62 72 554	2 Leeds25 3 54 69 278
3 G Willard 13 4 58 78 600	3 Eventon
4 G Barber14 3 53 68 486	4 Bolton25 4 47 67 268
5 P Durkin14 3 50 85 484	5 Chelses 25 3 51 68 264
6 D Berry14 2 50 60 429	6 Arsenal25 2 53 63 2.52
7 J Winter14 2 52 82 443	7 Derby
	8 Sheff Wed 25 3 44 59 227
8 U Rannie 14 1 52 57 4.07	
9 P Jones 12 2 41 51 4.25	9 C Palace26 2 48 59 227
10 M Riley13 2 42 52 400	10 Blackburn25 3 39 54 218
11 S Dunn11 2 37 47 4.27	11 Newcastle 25 2 41 51 204
12 A Wilde	12 West Hern 25 2 43 53 204
13 G Ashby 14 2 38 48 343	13 Soton
14 P Alcock 14 0 47 47 3.36	14 Man Utd26 0 44 44 169
15 K Burge	15 Liverpool 26 1 36 41 158
16 N Barry	16 Barnsley25 0 39 39 156
17 D Gellagher, 14 2 37 47 3.36	17 Wimbledon28 1 35 40 154
18 S Lodge15 2 35 45 300	16 Laicester26 1 33 38 146
19 M Bodenham14 0 41 41 2.93	40.0
(Premierable matches only: Red cards:	70 A 175-
Spts. Yellow: 1pt)	(Red cerds: Spts. Yellow: 1pt)
<b>L</b>	

## Fallon told me he stopped Top Cees, says TV presenter

### Racing

By Richard Edmondson and Greg Wood

THE LIBEL trial which is curworld was yesterday told by Derek Thompson, the Channel 4 racing presenter, that Kieren Fallon, the champion jockey, told him that he had deliberately prevented the horse from winning the race in question on the instructions of Jack Ramsden, the husband of the horse's trainer, Lynda. Fallon, subsequently recalled to the witness box, denied the suggestion.

Fallon and the Ramsdens are suing The Sporting Life over an probably should have won". unsigned editorial in May 1995 after the horse, Top Cees, won three weeks earlier in the

racing journalist whose evidence in The Sporting Life libel

trial caused such a stir yester-

ber of the Channel 4 team

Thompson, 47, has estab-

lished a reputation that he will

talk to anyone, indeed to any-

thing - from the champion

jockey to a goat. His wide range

and uncrushable matiness have

some praising his consummate

professionalism, others reach-

smooth - it has been said he is

veneer all the way through -

with an almost permanently

fixed smile (false at times, he ad-

mits) and a manner that is

sometimes undeniably patron-

ising. He tends to be given the

lightweight, off-beat spots on

Channel 4 and aims for populist

appeal, but he is by no means

the inside flap of the cover of his

recently published book Tom-

mo's Year gives his nickname as

"The Master of the Micro-

phone". Many, however, know

him as "The Nodding Dog", a

reference to the constant head-

bobbing that accompanies many

interviews, or "Toilet" Thomp-

The biographical blurb on

everyone's cup of tea.

Thompson's style is veneer-

ing for the sick bag.

have mike, will interview.

Sporting Life, deny libel. They say the article was justified and fair comment on a "scandal" that was a matter of public interest.

The newspaper's counsel, Richard Hartley QC - who had rently the focus of the racing earlier said that his best evidence to stop it." would be if he could produce someone who had overheard someone telling Fallon not to win at Newmarket - asked Thompson in the High Court in London for his reaction to the result of the Swaffham Handicap.

> Thompson, who was subpoenaed on his return from working in Dubai on Monday, said he felt that the horse "probably should have finished an awful lot closer with a more forceful ride, and

On the night of the race, he was dining with friends at the Old the Chester Cup. The editorial Plough pub near Newmarket, suggested all three had when he saw Pallon. He told the "stopped" the fancied Top Cees court: "I don't want to repeat this in open court, which is why I've Swaffham Handicap at New- tried to stop it coming to open market. Mirror Group News- court because it was said to me you." He added: "I knew Kieren papers, publishers of The in confidence. I was asking as a very good jockey, although

Matiness of the man with a mike

on the reporter

son. The goat, a racehorse's

companion, is to blame for the

latter as viewers were informed:

and Lester Piggott, never one to

waste words, apparently told

him to "F\*\*\* off" in front of a

worldwide audience of hundreds

of millions on Derby Day in 1983.

Derek Thompson arriving at

"Tommoballs" are legion.

"Oh look, it's doing a pooh."

DEREK THOMPSON, the Sue Montgomery

day, is best-known as the mem- who will talk to

whose watchwords might be: anyone, or anything

this afternoon as I thought he greatly as a super horseman." would win' and Kieren's words were, 'Yes, I thought the horse would win as well but when I got

"It might have been said flippantly, he might have had a couple too many. I am just repeating what he said to me one night in the pub."

Thompson said that he mencouple of people at the next morning's Channel Four production meeting and suggested it might be worth interviewing Fallon, as Top Cees' failure to win was a major racing story.

"Kieren was obviously quite reluctant . . he was being hounded by the press, if that's the right word, so I said: It will do you good to talk about it.'

"I did say that what was said last night in The Plough will not come out and I will look after

racecourse in Dubai. He also

contributes to the Irish televi-

sion station RTE and has his

name on a premium-rate tip-

still at Guisborough Grammar

School, when he called the run-

ners home at his local Cleveland

After he left school at 17, he

point-to-point.

His made his debut with a mi-

'What happened with Top Cees not socially. I admired him He said he was reluctant to

become involved in the case because he had no desire to get ininto the paddock Jack told me volved with litigation between people he knew on both sides. "It's as simple as that. I did not want this to come out."

Patrick Milmo QC, for the Ramsdens and Fallon, opened his cross-examination by saying: "What you have just told the tioned the conversation to a court about Kieren Fallon is an outrageous lie - that's right, is it not?"

Thompson: "If you think so, that's up to you. But no, it's

Milmo: "I'm putting that to you, Mr Thompson, I want you to face it. My question is what you have just said about Kieren Fallon, sitting down there on that front bench, is an outrageous lie."

Thompson: "That is incor-

Milmo alleged that Thompson had been "boasting" to his Channel 4 colleagues that Fallon had confided in him about being told to pull Top Cees.

Thompson: "The word 'boasting' is not correct."

He undoubtedly enjoys the He said that what was said by celebrity status that TV exposure has given him, but then an him in the production meeting was confidential. "It's the same ego of a certain size is not uncommon in visual media work. reason you might talk to people And to his credit, the man also in chambers. It was off the record gives the impression he would and you would be annoyed if it was repeated elsewhere." carry on interviewing if some-

Fallon himself was recalled to the stand to rebut Thomphis book, the show must go on. son's version of events at the Thompson earns his living as a TV presenter, as a commen-Old Plough. "I wouldn't have said anything like that," Fallon tator for Satellite Information told Milmo, "I wouldn't call Mr Services (the service which Ramsden "Jack", I'd call him shows live racing in betting shops) and at Nad El Sheba Mr Ramsden,"

Later, Milmo asked if there was any truth in the allegation that he had deliberately stopped Top Cees winning.

"No," Fallon said. "Something like that would be terrible. For any jockey to even think about stopcrophone at the age of 15, while ping a horse would jeopardise their career. What Mr Thompson has invented is a lie. Mr Ramsden has never asked me to stop a horse as long as I've ridden for him, or Mrs Ramsden for that matter."

gained first-hand experience of Cross-examined by Hartley, horses, working for periods of six months each for the Bishop he denied that it would be easy for a rider of his ability to stop Auckland trainer Denys Smith and Pierre Sanoner at Chantila horse. "You could find trouble, not take the gaps?" Hartly, and rode in several amateur races on the Flat and over ley asked. "You're going at 35 miles per hour, three inches jumps, famously beating the Prince Of Wales in a close finfrom the horse in front," Fallon replied. "You don't look for ish at Plumpton in 1980 for his trouble, you try to avoid it."



Martin Johnson (centre) 'needs to punch his weight' against Wales at Twickenham today

### Woodward faces watershed

THIS is it, then: sink or swim, do or die, put up or shut up. Clive Woodward could not have imagined things would reach such a pretty pass so soon in his tenure as England coach; indeed, it is perfectly possible that he does not consider today's Five Nations dust-up with Wales to be a watershed occasion at all. In which case, he sees things rather differently to the 78,000 who will sit in judgement on him at Twicken-

ham this afternoon. Woodward is not on trial to the degree that Jack Rowell found himself on that win-orbust Calcutta Cup day in Edinburgh two years ago. But defeat at the hands of the Welsh would not only signal the end of a long honeymoon with an English sporting public swept off its feet by seductive words, it would also set the tone for an old-fashioned door-slamming, furniturethrowing domestic with the coach's grey-suited in-laws at

the Rugby Football Union. It is now seven Tests since England's sweet chariot made it all the way to the chequered flag and the record of the Woodward regime is two draws and three defeats from five outings. No one is on the phone to Dial-a-Timbril just at the moment - New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and France are the Real McCoys of world rugby, after all - but today, the coach takes on a second-class power for the first time. As Roger Uttley, the England manager, admitted this week, a bad one against Wales will inevitably lead to "questions being asked in high places".

Worryingly for Woodward, it is not merely a question of England avoiding a second

Lawrence Dailaglio and com pany need is an extremely "good one", just to see off a Welsh side umusually confident of translating their paper potential to the

green grass of the playing field. It is 20 years since the the seven wonders of the valleys -Gareth, Gerald, Phil, JPR and the Pontypool front row bestrode the rugby landscape and seldom since have the red shirts poured across the Severn in such high spirits.

Arwel Thomas, the magically gifted outside-half from Swansea, articulated the feel-good factor this week by saying: "If the pack gives us some runnable ball, we'll win. We have more idea behind the scrum because we've got better players, man for man, from nine to 15.

"England have played all the top-quality sides under Woodward and shown signs of moving away from the kicking game but if winning is a habit, it's a habit they don't have at the moment. We definitely fancy this one."

W Green

í Guscott

A Healey

P Graysor

K Bracker

P Vickery

G Archer.

successive "bad one". What Thomas will fancy it a whole his weight in the rucks and lot more if England's reshaped front-row trio spend the afternoon peering into their own darkened recesses, as the previous incarnation did in Paris a fortnight ago. Phil Vickery, the all-important new cap on the tight head, has been exposed early to the rigours of international duty, presumably because Woodward does not believe the Welsh scrummagers

will prove nearly as troublesome as Christian Califano and Franck Tournaire. He may be right on that score, but Andrew Lewis is playing the best rugby of his career and the outcome of his tête-á-tête with Vickery will be fundamental to the Outcome.

As, indeed, will the performance of England's back five. Martin Johnson is on a busman's holiday at the moment and for all Uttley's pseudobabble about staleness and burn-out, it is high time the Lions captain raised a gallop and concentrated on punching

Carcht

Cardiff, capt

-Richmond

-Harlequins

Swanse:

-Pontypridd

-Cardiff

ing opposition backs. The Welsh have no second row in the same universe - indeed, they have no one as good as Garath Archer, either - and knife-edge Tests are usually won by the side capitalising on the odd area of clear superiority.

Unless Johnson and Archer help secure the English scrummage, Dallaglio and his extravagantly equipped backrow confrères will be sitting ducks for the second time in as many matches. As Olivier Magne, the outstanding French flanker, pointed out in Paris, the scrum is once again the most influential physical and psychological theatre of rugby action. "No one plays this game going backwards," he said. "At least, they don't if they're serious about winning."

An even contest at the sharp end should ensure a compelling battle of wits in midfield, where the quartet of centres from last summer's Lions tour of South Africa are preparing to lock horns in a four-cornered game of full-contact chess. One of them, Jeremy Guscott, wins his 50th cap this afternoon and with characteristic swagger, he says he relishes the fact that he will be opposed by Allan Bateman. whom he describes as "the best centre in the world".

But Guscott's animal instinct ensures he will keep one eye fixed on Bateman's partner, Scott Gibbs. "I don't know how he does it, but Jerry has survived the best part of a decade at the top level without getting a slamming," said the Swansea hitman yesterday, a disconcerting smile faintly visible on his deceptively studious features. The message was clear: Gibbs owes Guscott, but Wales owe

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

### ACROSS'

1 Developed an artistic shared by everyone) (8.5) Once again appearing as new in turbulent art scene

Murphy runs behind

gallery (5) See female in sun bonnet in ray of sunlight (5) Pursuing about "alterna

tive" clothes (9) 14 Not breaking the law, locating home in Orkney Is-

16 Fanatic: adult that is lacking first signs of wit and nous (7)

18 Waits, having obligations about arrival (7)20 Disreputable alley in very loud surroundings - here's a little of the volume (3-4) 21 Ambitious type - one of the jet-set? (4-5)

Lad hangs around Post Office to trifle amorously 24 Beak imprisons one mak-

ing a row (5) 25 Just time to get into US University? That's a lie!

Tennis on the radio perhaps provokes disagreement (4,2,3,4)

### DOWN

2 Unfortunate reaction when injecting new pot? On horseback, and read

for a fall? (5)
"Later arrival – regret losing power" - railway

Director-General restricts what's excessive in making points (7) It'll involve moon, star and galaxy ultimately (9)

No good avoiding showing disapproval together It shows you a shade an-

gry over egg production One itches to send ball flying! (7-6) An inflexible attitude in-

fests heads of some firms, unfortunately (9) 17 Use "parrot" loosely for this old flying creature

19 What can do for such a meal - can small fish? (4-3)

20 Supply vase to be put in 22 Forbidding the introduction of erotic filth (5) 23 Pen a couple of letters it

a certain manner (5) The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crussword, P. O. Bex 4018, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Whatel, London E14 SBL Please use the box musber and postcode and one canada to the technique.

### England even more. England give Italians chance to make up the 'Six Nations'

**ENGLAND v WALES** 

at Twickenham

Sale 14 G Thomas.

Lecester 13 A Bateman

...Bath 12 S Gibbs.

Saracens 9 R Howley.

A Lewis

B Williams

D Young...

M Voyle..

Lexester II N Walke

Wasps, capt 6 C Charvis

Saracers 8 S Quinnell

Northampton 10 A Thomas

Harlequins 1

Leicester 4

Leicester 7

Newcastle 5

Leicester

By Chris Hewett

Albans Road, Walford

IT TOOK them far too long to get round to it, but England finally fell in line with the rest of northern hemisphere rugby yesterday by officially inviting Italy to the Five Nations party. The oldest international championship in the game will become the

the year 2000 - a new tournament for a new millenium.

Replacements: 14 M Catt (Bath); 17 P de Glanville (Bath); 18 M Dawson Northampson); 19 A Diprose: 20 D Grewcock (both Saracets); 21 D Gan-

Referee: CHawke (New Zealand)

Rugby Football Union council members agreed unanimously to extend the competition. France, Ireland and Scotland, all of whom had recently been beaten by Italy, confirmed their support at a meeting in January, as did Six Nations from the spring of

Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

three-point victory over the new boys only a fortnight ago.

neplacements: 16 W Procter (Lanell): 17 L Davies (Cardiff): 18 P John (Pontypridd): 19 R Appleyand (Swarses): 20 C Stephens in Cardiff Cardiff

Kick-off: 2.0 (Sky Sports 2)

Vernon Pugh, a Five Nations Comittee member, congratulated Giancarlo Dondi, the president of the Italian Rugby Union. "This must be a very proud day for him," said Pugh. We were all very impressed by the professional and persuasive Wales, who secured a narrow arguments made by the Ital-

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ians both on and off the field."

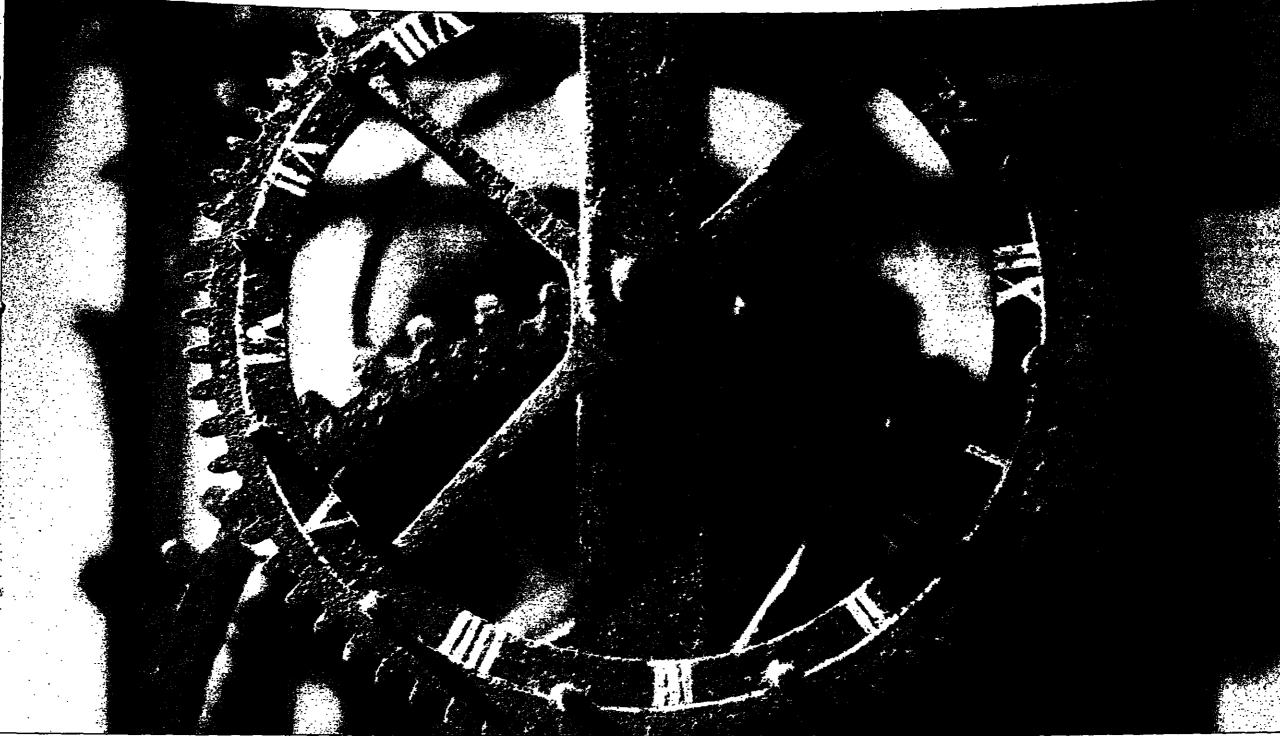
The deserving Italians will be the first Five Nations newcomers since France, who were granted a place in 1910. ● England's top clubs reached

agreement with the Rugby Football Union yesterday over plans to extend Allied Dunbar Premiership One by two clubs to 14 next season. With no relegation this season, the news comes as a major boost to Bristol and London Irish, who currently occupy the bottom two positions in Premiership One.

■ ١١٠١ من الأصل

## YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE, PROPERTY & MOTORING



### Learn lessons from the master money makers

Only a handful of professionals outperform the markets consistently over time. But, as Jonathan Davis explains, they make investors a fortune

Who would not want to be a professional investment manager? On the face of it, there are few better jobs to be had. After football players and pop stars, there are few industries in which the top performers are so handsomeiv rewarded. The bull market of the past 15 years has made the profession one of the most highly sought after in the City. Salaries for those who can demonstrate that they are one of the handful of truly exceptional talents can easily run into the high six figures, with

ihed

matching bonuses on top. Investment is one of the most highly competitive businesses on - arth and to produce exceptional re-Turns year in, year out is at least as great a challenge as winning an Olympic medal. A handful of professionals do, however, have what the Nobel economics laureate Paul Samuelson calls the elusive extra "performance quotient".

Having spent a year on an indepth study of eight of the most successful professional investors in

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المعازية ال

43tions

Britain, with the idea of trying to establish what have been the major factors behind their success, I can report that the qualities you need to succeed in this demanding business are not the ones which the ordinary investor might at first imagine. The eight I looked at include some of the bestknown names in the business.

All these investors have the same objective: to produce returns that exceed those of the market as a whole. But their way of setting about doing so could not be more different. All of them are versed in the art of balancesheet analysis. All have their own distinctive valuation techniques, which they are happy to describe in detail."

Some, such as Anthony Bolton and Jim Slater, are out-and-out stockpickers. They look for exceptional performing shares, rather than taking overall views on the direction

Bolton is big on detailed company research. His two funds, which cover the UK and Europe, specialise in is moving.

finding out-of-favour companies that other investors are shunning for one reason or another, something formerly owned by Robert Maxwell, or nuclear power companies which nobody understands, are the sort of things he loves. Such shares are often irrationally undervalued and make large gains when they return to favour.

Slater has his own screening system for finding growth shares that are not yet fully valued by the market, based initially on the ratio between their earnings and the rating those earnings are accorded in the market. He likes to back broad investment themes (such as the spread of sports retailing and the Millennium bug) and also keeps a very close eye on directors' share dealings. His "Zulu Principle" holds that you do best by sticking to a few companies you can really become an expert on rather than trying to work out how entire industries or the economy as a whole

Other investors prefer to take a broader view. Mark Mobius, a 60-yearold fitness freak, spends 80 per cent of his time flying around the globe in a private jet looking for bargains in more than 30 different emerging markets. Ian Rushbrook, who runs Personal Assets in Edinburgh, uses his own sophisticated computer models to help him try and decide if the markets are over-valued or not.

Nils Taube, Sir Jacob Rothschild's stock market adviser, specialises in spotting broad international trends that can be expected to head towards the UK and Europe. He was one of the first, 30 years ago, to spot the huge potential growth in supermarkets: now he is busy making money from . betting on the continued consolidation of Europe's financial and bank-

So no two methods for success are the same. As Anthony Bolton told me: "If you are going to out-perform the market, by definition you have to do something which is different from what everyone else is doing." It all sounds very easy, at least until you try to do it. Going against conventional opinion is something most of us find difficult to do. That is why many successful investors are essentially loners.

The paradox is that there is much less mystique about investment than is often realised. Some of the adages you need to succeed - for example, to run your profits and cut your losses - are almost as old as the hills. Yet few of us actually follow the advice. Buying the most popular shares in the markets, for example those with the highest price-earnings ratios, have been repeatedly shown to be a surefire route to long-term underperformance. Yet most investors, many professionals included, persist in doing just that.

In principle, there is no reason, most of the experts insist, why private investors cannot do just as well as the average professional investor. Although their information sources

are not so good, they have the advantages of having smaller funds to manage. They can afford to take a genuinely long-term view, a huxury that is in practice denied to most professional investment managers. In Anthony Bolton's words, there is actually very little original thought in investment. It is putting the wisdom of the ages into practice that is so difficult. Putting your money with the genuine superstars, provided you can spot them early enough, is just as good a strategy for long-term success in the stock mar-

'Money Makers', by The Independent's Jonathan Davis, a study of Britain's most successful professional investors, and what ordinary investors can learn from them, is published by Orion Business Books at £20. To order a copy at the specially discounted price of £15 (including P&P) call 01903 736736 and quote the reference number MMID.

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A spoonful of silver

5/JONATHAN

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On 24,5.96 the objective of the Fund (formerly known as Scotbits) was broadened from investment in financial services to igvestment in any economic sector.

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Figures are based on buying to selling price with gross income retrivested over 5 years to 01,01.98. Source: Micropal. The value will depend on individual circumstances. Exchange rates may also affect performance.

### **CLIFFORD GERMAN**

### Budget on a rates rise

as the Inflation-Finder General, Eddie rates seem to have more impact on it worse.) George can now afford to make long-term decisions on interest rates. But he is unlikely to want to change interest rates until he and his colleagues on the monetary committee have seen what the the Budget.

Interest rates and tax rates are two blades of the scissors the authorities traditionally use to trim the economy. Higher taxes and higher interest rates both slow the economy down while tax cuts and interest-rate cuts will speed it up, but tax changes and interest-rate changes work in slightly different ways because higher interest rates reward savers as well as penalising borrowers, while higher taxes reduce spending power across the whole economy and also reduce the government's budget deficit.

On past experience, tax changes affect spending and investment within a year

inflation and exchange rates, but if there is a right time to raise taxes it is in the early years of a government when the next election is far away.

Some members of the Bank of Eng-Chancellor does with the tax weapon in land's monetary committee think another rise in interest rates is needed to discourage borrowing and consumer spending and to puncture the inflationary boom in house prices.

But a rise in interest rates would make sterling even stronger and hurt exporters as well as reducing growth in the next two years and widening the gap might well be phased out, and the married between the UK and Europe at a time when pro-Europeans want it to narrow.

(How much better, dear reader, if the incoming Government had done what this column argued last summer and raised interest rates sharply to show it meant to control inflation and, at the same time, outflank the currency specwhereas the Bank of England argues that ulators at a stroke, because by now we changing interest rates can take up to two could be reducing rates again to soften

Freshly armed with a five-year mandate years to work through the system. Interest the downturn rather than risking making

Either way the next move is up to the Chancellor. The business community would like to see (personal) taxation rise so that interest rates and sterling could come down faster, but the record surge in tax receipts last month has brought the prospect of a budget surplus in 1999-2000 and there seems to be no need for a general rise in taxation next month.

Increases in tax on petrol and tobacco are certain, reforms to National Insurance, canital sains tax and inheritance tax are likely, tax relief on mortgage interest couples' allowance replaced by a restored child tax allowance. More tinkering with the taxation of pensions and savings, inchiding firm plans for Individual Savings Accounts, seems certain and there could even be tax cuts on booze plus a longpromised 10p rate of tax.

But the fine-tuning of policy will be left to left to the Bank of England and its

MONEY MAKEOVER

Put your capital to work when you retire

Name: Joan Denton Age: 60

Occupation: Retired The problem: Joan, from Norfolk, has recently retired and has purchased a house for cash.

She wants to maximise income to bring her as close as possible to her pre-retirement level of £9,500 per annum net, while taking as little risk as possible. Joan would prefer guaranteed income that would rise over time. Her other concern is that she may require residential care at some point in the future.

Joan's occupational pension scheme income amounts to £2,089 pa, which combined with State pension benefits will provide income of £5,731 pa. She also has an additional voluntary contribution (AVC) fund of £4,378, but is confused as to the options available to her.

Joan has around £65,000 in



a Halifax Gold Account, £20,000 in Premium Bonds and around £4,000 of "emergency" funds split between a Bardays' deposit account and The Saffron Walden building society. Joan

wishes to invest around £85,000 for future income in total. The Adviser: Paul Smith,

specialist consultant at Stirling Asset Management Ltd. 85a Great Portland Street, London, WIN 6JR, 0171 580 1555. The Advice: The simplest part of Joan's restructuring is the purchase of an annuity with her

pension AVC pot. Those funds are held with Equitable Life who have offered three annuities: a flat annuity at £340 pa, an annuity of £240 pa escalating at 3 per cent pa and an annuity of £220 pa escalating at the retail price index (RPI). Under occupational pension

regulations Joan has no alternative other than to buy an annuity with her AVC fund. The principles behind an annuity are straightforward. Buying one is a bit like a bet with an insurance company, in return for your cash they will pay you an income for life. If you die early they keep your lump sum and in effect win the bet, if you live to a ripe old age, they lose!

But the amount of annuity offered will vary depending on the company, the age of the purchaser and the type purchased. Annuity rates can vary between companies and may differ by 20 per cent. Shopping around will pay off every time.

come is indexed and her AVC it may be prudent to incorpopot is quite small, the level rate some provision for care. annuity offered by Equitable. The life assurance company

It is not inconceivable that Joan may require income for another 30 years. A considerable proportion of her capital is in premium bonds, which generate no specific growth or income but can, and have, provided Joan £50 to £150 per month. The marketing literature for premium bonds says anyone holding the maximum number of £20,000 will, with average luck, win 13 times a year and enjoy returns of around 5 per cent pa tax free. Having said this, there is no guarantee Joan will have average luck and, as a lower-rate tax payer, the tax-free element has less effect.

The only way to absolutely guarantee future rising income would be to pool the available resources and purchase a life annuity linked to the RPI. Unfortunately, the maximum annuity indexation that most life companies offer as a matter of routine is 8.5 per cent pa and they only quote fully inflationprotected life annuities under special circumstances. An annuity based on £85,000 could provide Joan about £6,400 level, or a starting sum of £2,200 indexed at 8.5 per cent pa. The advantage of life annuities over pension ones is that not all the income is taxed as income, a proportion is

deemed to be return of capital. I would also recommend some funds are held on deposit at a bank or building society. Bristol and West's postal account would offer 7.53 per cent.

A popular lower-risk investment is the with-profit insurance bond, which is in effect a single premium investment policy designed to provide a predictable rates, inflation and tax alinvestment return over a period of time. While these are insurance products and do usually provide increased death benefits to the underlying investment value, they are not designed to provide family protection in the event of death. Typically, the policy will pay 101 per cent of the value of the investment at death and technically, as an insurance policy, it enjoys special tax treatment.

Where this type of investment offers more security is that each year a bonus rate is announced in advance and will be payable on the amount of the investment. That bonus will be paid regardless of whether investment returns justify that level of return. This year's bonus rates look to Bryn Colton

care: joan

Denton does not

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investment may only attract annual bonuses of 7 per cent pa but may also benefit from 2 to 3 per cent pa in terminal bonuses. There is no immediate per-

sonal tax liability on withdrawals of up to 5 per cent pa for the first 20 years of the bond, which can be rolled forward if not used in one particular year. As Joan is likely to remain a basic-rate tax payer there will be no personal liability on regular income taken from the bond. Joan's concern is that as she

becomes older she may need substantial care, maybe in a home. Residential care can cost anything between £10,000 to £20,000 pa and the average stay is around three years. These costs already exceed the level of income that Joan's pensions and investments could generate. which could lead to rapid erosion of savings, or the value of her house which she has spent her life working to purchase.

Since 1990, local authorities have been legally obliged to recover the cost of care. Most income is taken into account in that assessment, including pensions but, regardless of income. capital assets exceeding £16.000 may make the individual responsible for paying for the standard fees of residential care.

While our main considera-As Joan's other pension in- tion must be income for Joan. Life would be the best choice. Lincoln has devised a more practical solution with their Independence Bond. due to come on the market shortly. This is in effect an investment vehicle, but can incorporate a level of benefits higher than the amount invested. These benewith regular wins ranging from fits will be paid out if the individual is unable to undertake certain activities of daily living, terminal illness and death. The cost of that insurance is taken from the investment fund on a

monthly costed basis. This may sound expensive, but, in reality, is not if the mechanics are understood. For an investment of £25,000, and a protection level of £50,000, the potential risk to the life company is only £25,000 at outset. In the early years the investor has the security of knowing that a move to residential care

may not erode other assets. Where Lincoln score with this product is that it carries an investment management charge of 0.25 per cent pa as opposed to the more normal 1 per cent pa industry average. It allows penalty-free withdrawals at any time, should the necessity arise, but the capital growth would be

better utilised at a later date. In conclusion, I would suggest a portfolio consisting of retention of existing "emergency" deposit holdings; a £50,000 with-profit bond with 5 per? cent pa regular income deducted; £25,000 invested with Lincoln's Independence Bond with £50,000 worth of disability, terminal illness and death cover and £10,000 deposited with the

Bristol and West postal account. Assuming current interest: lowances in the 1998/99 tax. year, I estimate that Joan's net income could amount to £8,768 pa, not too far away from her pre-retirement income. By only drawing 5 per cent income from the with-profit bond and none from Lincoln bond both should benefit from capital growth to insure that greater income will be available in the future.

While the two bonds stiggested fall outside the local authority-assessed asset criteria (because they are technically life assurance policies) substantial provision has been made via one of them to ensure that Joan receives the level of care she would want while still leaving enough of her lifetime's accube between 6 and 7 per cent. An mulated wealth to pass on.

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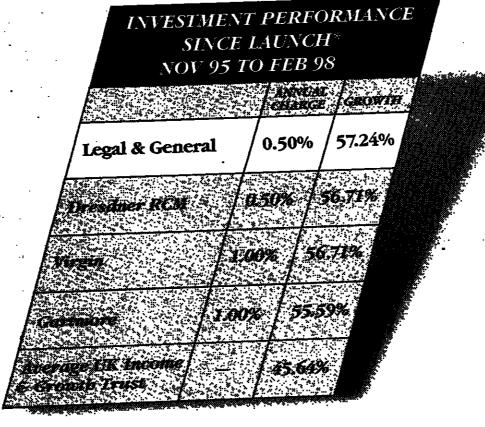
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Section 3 A TOP A San F

## COLLECT TO INVEST: JOHN WINDSOR Silver spoons regain their sparkle

Christie's expectation of £100,000-£150,000 for a famous set of 12 silver 17th century apostle spoons next month is a reminder that prices for collectable wrought silver - and apostle spoons in particular - are showing a sharp rise. Although the silver market remained stable during the recession, it has been dull for a

Dating from the 15th century, apostle spoons, with cast and chased terminals representing saints, have risen in value at auction by some 50 per cent in the past couple of years. You can still buy 17th century apostles with unascribed maker's marks for under £500 - if you are lucky - but those whose makers are known have been selling for three and four times estimate.

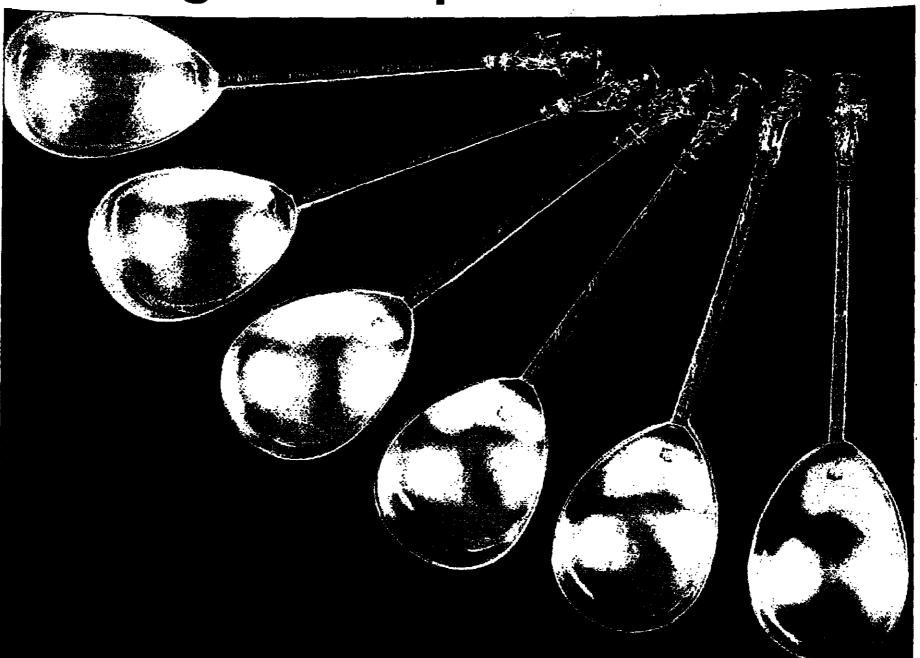
For example, at Sotheby's last July, an English provincial silver-gilt apostle spoon with an unascribed mark of about 1655 sold for a modest £368, towards the low end of its £350-£450 estimate. But in the same sale, a St Bartholomew spoon of 1636 with the mark of Robert Tyte of Salisbury made £1,955, four times the £400-£600 estimate.

The reason why an unascribed spoon of 1550, estimated £600-£800, fetched a whopping £2,185, was probably because the buyer had had more time to discover a name for the unascribed WC and star mark than the auctioneers.

For a variety of reasons, wellheeled new buyers are entering the apostle spoon market. They are middle aged and retired lawyers, bankers and accountants - not only British but Americans and Australians - with time to read the growing number of textbooks that have made spoon-buying less of a

A Henry VIII St Matthias spoon, estimated £5,000-£8,000 at David Lay's auction house in Penzance three years ago, would have fetched nowhere near the £18,700 that was paid for it if Timothy Kent, a retired barrister and leading spoon expert. had not identified and published its fringed S mark as belonging to William Simpson, apprenticed to the London maker Robert Preston in

Simpson was one of the finest and of the 16th century. Kent's book on the spoon makers of the West spoons come from - has had a a room) but by discerning collectors



A seller's market: Prices for apostles spoons have risen by 50 per cent since forgeries which flooded the market in the 1980s have been eradicated Photograph: Sotheby's

steadily growing impact on the market since its publication in 1992.

Although prices for apostle spoons will probably continue to rise for a year or two, it is safest to consider this as a seller's market. The most prolific makers of the first half high prices are not being paid by speculators hoping for a quick profit, or by interior designers (seven-inch Country - where many apostle spoons can hardly be said to liven up for top-of-the-market gems.

who want that spoon even if they have to pay through the nose.

If they pause to think of investment, they might consider, wisely, returning their rarest purchases to auction in 10 years' time. By then, today's new collectors will have had their fill of run-of-the-mill pieces and will be competing even more fiercely

Such maturation of the market

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is already evident. A 1490 spoon depicting St James the Greater, from the earliest recorded set of hallmarked apostle spoons, fetched £22,000 at Phillips in October 1990 and £32,200 at Christie's in July 1993 - a gain of £10,200 in less than three years. If you really want to invest, you must dig deep to buy the

very best. The rarities being cashed in at in private hands.

Sotheby's on 5 March are the 12 apostle spoons of the Swaythling Collection, reputedly presented by Charles II to Martha Clayton, wife of Sir Robert Clayton, Lord Mayor of London. Six date from 1524 and six from 1553. Complete 16th century sets are exceptionally rare. The Swaythling group is probably the finest of only two such sets still

There are reasons other than improved documentation to feel confidence in apostle spoons. They are cheaper, and available in larger, more collectable numbers, than any other 16th or early 17th century objects. And they have lasting charm as cherished possessions from the days when cutlery was scarce (ordinary people carried their own St Austell, Cornwall PL26 7JD spoons) and when families knew the (01726 65269).

saints' names and prayed together before meals. They were sometimes given as christening presents. The current surge is, in part, a

response to the all-clear following the flooding of the spoon market in the early Eighties by the forger Martin Russell. Almost all of his expert work has now been eradicated.

While fear of spoon forgeries lasted, other silver collectables such as tea caddies, wine labels and Vesta boxes increased steadily in price. Fine examples of each sell for around £2,000. An eagle's wing tea caddy of 1830 that would have been worth £1,200-£1,500 two years ago sold for £3,800 at Phillips in January.

By comparison, apostle spoons are two or three centuries older, at least as fascinating, and, until recently, less expensive. Their current rise in value can be interpreted as the filling of the price vacuum artificially created by the forgeries. So drawers of escalating price graphs should not be over-optimistic.

As for the current heavy speculation in bullion silver by the "Sage of Omaha", Warren Buffett - bullion prices have little or no effect on wrought silver prices. Even at £4 an ounce, silver content is only a tiny proportion of total value. But it's comforting for collectors to know that someone is taking an interest.

Besides bidding at auction, consider visiting the country's leading spoon dealers, JH Bourdon-Smith, where the author of the standard guides on spoons, Mr Kent, can be consulted. The firm makes a point of selling nothing that it would not buy back. There is also a silver spoon collectors' club.

The next auction at Phillips, who are good on spoons, is 15 April, 12 noon.

Two standard guides by Tim Kent, available from JH Bourdon-Smith, 24 Mason's Yard, Duke Street, London SWIY 6BU: "London Silver Spoon Makers, 1500-1697" (published by the Silver Society) 1981, £8 + p&p £1 inland, £2 abroad. "West Country Silver Spoons and Their Makers", 1550-1750 (published by Bourdon-Smith), 1992, £35 + p&p £3 inland, £7 abroad.

An annual subscription for the Spoon Collectors Club costs £29.50 and includes its bi-monthly journal The Finial'. Contact Terry and Mary Haines, Glenleigh Park, Sticker,

### Barclaycard grants a new lifeline to students

The National Union of from one of the existing credit Students (NUS) has just clinched a deal giving its official seal of approval to Student Barclaycards, the junior version of the UK's first - and still its leading – credit card, in return for a donation of £1 a head to the union's funds. The deal is worth a cool £220,000 a year to the national union and to local student unions.

NUS national president Douglas Trainer insists that Student Barclaycards are consumer friendly because holders are limited to £350 worth of credit and there is no real risk of financial novices being lured into a lifetime of debt. No annual fees are charged for the cards and students who now take out a card will qualify for free gifts or cash bonuses.

For many students, the Student Barclaycard is a lifeline. Only 32 per cent of the 1.7 million full-time students in the UK have a credit or debit card, but this is almost entirely due to the fact that a student living on a grant alone is unlikely to qualify for a conventional credit card

STANDARD LIFE BANK

card companies. The qualifications for a Student Barclaycard with its lower monthly spending limit are much easier to meet, and 45 per cent of the 550,000 full-time students who use plastic to eke out their poverty-stricken existence have Student Barclaycards.

This fine for students who stay in credit, becausé they can enjoy interest-free credit if they pay off their bills every month before the payment date. But, let's face it, how many

students can afford to pay their credit-card debts off in full each month when they only get their grants three times a year? On unpaid balances each month, new Student Barclaycardholders taking advantage of the absence of an annual fee will pay 1.515 per cent a month, equal to 19.7 per cent a year, and existing customers pay1.65 per cent a month, equal to 21.7 per cent over a full year - and well ahead of the cheaper card companies like MBNA or RBS

**Clifford German** 

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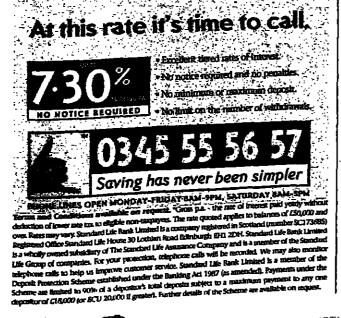
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### **BRIAN TORA**

### Some assurance for US bulls

when the Government starts ing an estimated £30bn to throwing statistics at us so we Middle England, as building can gauge the state of the societies and life companies economy. There are those who consider we take our own temperature too often, but regular statistics do at least demonstrate a trend. And there are two worrying trends here in the UK at present: rising wage settlements

and consumer spending. In a way, we should not be too surprised over the trend in wage settlements. Even if the Government has not loosened the reigns since it took power, there is the perception that things have changed and years of difficult wage negotiating, in which employers have been backed by a parsimonious administration, have come to an end.

Moreover, the economy is buoyant. With senior managers and company directors benefiting, why should workers not have a slice of this particular cake too? But it has worried enough of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee to ensure a split vote over bolding down interest rates.

The funny thing is that in the US, where unemployment is even lower than here, wage settlements remain subdued. Perhaps the workers there are all too aware of the threat the wounded Asian tigers could present. And interest rates continue to fall in America. Another threat could be over the horizon, though. Or is it an opportunity?

The relative buoyancy of retail sales here is a recent phenomenon. Up until less than a year ago people were still reluctant to spend, despite a strong economy. Then

It is that time of the month came the windfalls, deliverdemutualised,

In America, of course, everything is always bigger. So it is with personal finance. It seems the American life assurance industry is poised to restructure in a move that will deliver billions of dollars of shares to as wide a range of recipients as ben-

efited in the UK. Prudential of America has already announced the intention to start the ball rolling. If listed in New York, Prudential is likely to be the tenth-largest company, with a market capitalisation extending into hundreds of billions of dollars. Makes even Halifax look small beer.

And this could be only the beginning. Metropolitan Life, the second-biggest life assurer - with assets above \$170bn, is likely to follow suit. Prospects look exciting.

All this will take a couple of years but it heralds a restructuring of the US life assurance industry every bit as dramatic as what hap-

The wealth that it will thrust into the hands of Americans does not bear thinking about. It could trigger a spending boom. But then again, it should help support the stock market. Given the way personal savings have boomed over the past decade in the US, this could add to the wealth locked away for the future. Maybe those longterm bulls of American shares have got it right.

Brian Tora is chairman of Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee

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## How to read between the lines of annual reports

Investors often regard all company mail save their dividend cheques as junk. But studying a firm's "Reports and accounts are vital in annual report and accounts can pay off. John Andrew explains what to look out for.

One joke doing the rounds of the accountancy profession in the early 1970s was that a company had explored cutting postage costs by sending the shareholders' dividend cheques out with the annual report and accounts. Their research revealed that most shareholders threw and the cheques would be thrown

away with them, and the project was nowadays take considerable time and abandoned.

Since then companies have made great efforts to improve the quality and readability of their messages to which you might have current or future interest," says Gill Nott, chief executive of ProShare.

Companies are obliged by law to report regularly to shareholders. It is a means by which those with a financial interest in the enterprise can judge how well or badly the business is doing. The main report and accounts are published annually following the end of the company's financial year.

that a company has of explaining its the report and accounts away unread business to the outside world, so it is not surprising that most companies

Total cost of deductions

Projected effect of deductions over 25 years.

effort in producing the document.

Generally, they are glossy publications which contain photographs and colourful diagrams detailing the shareholders, and with good reason. business's progress. Naturally they also contain reams of figures. Howassessing the performance and ever, they typically begin with narfinancial position of a company in rative statements which provide a commentary on the business and financial performance of the

company. The opening section is usually the chairman's statement, which gives an overall view of what has happened over the past year, as well as some comments on the future prospects of the company.

The next narrative statement is normally the chief executive's report. This provides a detailed commentary of the performance of each part of the enterprise as well as information affecting the company as a whole. In some reports this section is called the "operating and financial review".

at 01/07/94 💽 at 01/07/96

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Normally, the directors' report follows. This contains data which has to be disclosed by law. It includes details of any charitable or political donations the company may have made as well as giving the names of the directors and their personal

Of course, the most important element of the report and accounts is the financial information. If you find pages of figures daunting, follow Gill Nott's advice: "At least take time to read the chairman's and chief executive's statements, which will give you a feel for future prospects. Is it optimistic, or is there a note of caution there?"

Although the financial information may look complicated, it is relatively easy to become familiar with the columns of figures. Ease yourself in by taking a look at the financial summary. This gives the financial highlights for at least the past two and sometimes up to five years. It is there-

the trend for profits as well as earnings, dividends and net asset value per share.

The two key financial statements are the balance sheet and the profit and loss account. The balance sheet is a snapshot of the company's situation at the end of its trading year. It shows what the organisation owns - its assets - and what it owes - its

Most companies traded on the stock market control a number of subsidiary companies. They therefore prepare a consolidated balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities of all the businesses combined, as well as a balance sheet for the parent

The profit and loss account shows how much profit the company has made. It shows the turnover, which is the total sum of goods or services sold during the trading year, and the company's expenses.

fore possible - at a glance - to see If income exceeds costs the company has made an operating profit, but interest carned and paid then has to be taken into account to arrive at company's tax dues, the dividends per share to dividends per share over paid to shareholders and the profits a period will reveal the company's retained by the business will also be

> Other information to look at is the cash flow statement. This shows how much cash the company has generated from the business and other sources, such selling a large asset. It also shows how much cash has been spent over the year.

Here are some points to look out

Cash flow: It is vital that there is a strong cash flow as it demonstrates that the earnings are real and it helps fund the company's expansion. ■ Turnover: This is another key indicator. If turnover is up profits and earnings per share should be too. ■ Pre-tax profits: If a business is

doing well profits and turnover should show a rising trend.

Dividends: Many investors prefer companies which pay a steadily rising dividend. Comparing earnings

It is essential to read the notes to the accounts as these often have important information tucked away. Although report and accounts are important, you must always remember that their contents are historic. You must keep up to date through newspapers and magazines with companies' news.

Introduction to Annual Reports & Accounts' is a simple guide with a stepby-step approach to interpreting the information. It is published by ProShare at £4.95 including p&p. Orders to ProShare (UK) Ltd. Library Chambers, 13-14 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5BQ.

### Check the cost of your investments

on 25 year unit linked personal pension plan



### THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

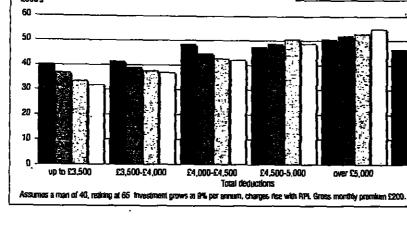
tainty about the current state of mortgages or unit trusts, the the retail financial services business. One is that consumers are service-oriented business will sensibly beginning to take a continue to drag. much greater interest in planning their own financial welfare. ment was right to insist on The pensions selling scandal has brought home that nobody has an excuse any more for not now three years since the intaking greater care of their own finances. The State is no longer offering to do the job. and the industry - left to its own devices - has failed dismally to demonstrate that it is in the interests first at all times.

The second thing that can be said is that there are also clear and positive signs of improvement. As consumers become more aware, and as past barriers to effective competition have started to come down, there is no mistaking the pressure for reform which greater competition is creating in the design and selling of retail financial products.

۲,

Both the insurance and banking sectors have undergone sweeping changes in the last few years, many for the better, and specialist providers such as unit trust and investment trust companies are also slowly starting to adapt to a more competitive environment.

Disclosure is proving to be a key element in the process of empowering consumers. Without clear and transparent information about the nature and cost of different financial prod-



Two things can be said with cer- ucts, whether they are pensions, transition towards a genuinely

> greater disclosure of information about product costs. It is troduction of new statutory rules forcing insurance companies to disclose the full costs of different life insurance and pensions plans. Nine months ago the same rules were applied ment Authority's latest annual reports on the effect of the disclosure rules throw some interesting light on the pace of change that has taken place.

Anyone who can be bothered to go to the library and ask for the reports will be able to see how his own policies or savings schemes compare in cost with those of all the other main providers. Of course, cost is not the only issue in picking a savings provider: some of the companies with the best performance track records naturally try to extract a price for their superior investment performance. But what the figures do allow you to do is to see exactly how much additional return you need to obtain from a higher cost savings scheme or pension to compensate for the

extra amount you are paying. A fund management com-

pany with a particularly good track record as an active investor may do better than an in-That is why the last governcent a year more each year (as some do), then the final sum you end up with may well be

The overall story from the life and pensions business is one the graphic shows, the overall business of putting consumer to unit trusts, investment trusts year pension or endowment two. That is no doubt the price and personal equity plans policy that are eaten up in (PEPs). The Personal Invest- commission, charges and other being more volatile and less easy although the rate of improvement slowed in 1997.

> The range of costs between the best and worst provider is still quite large: for a 20 year unit-linked pension, for example, it ranges from 0.8 per cent a year in lost return (Equitable Life, the cheapest) to three times that amount for the most

It is probably no accident that one area where disclosure is not yet required - which is in showing the effect that stopping premiums on a life insurance savings scheme has on maturity and transfer values - is also one where the impact of costs and charges has, on average, remained much higher. The PIA sensibly intends to extend its rules to this area from now on.

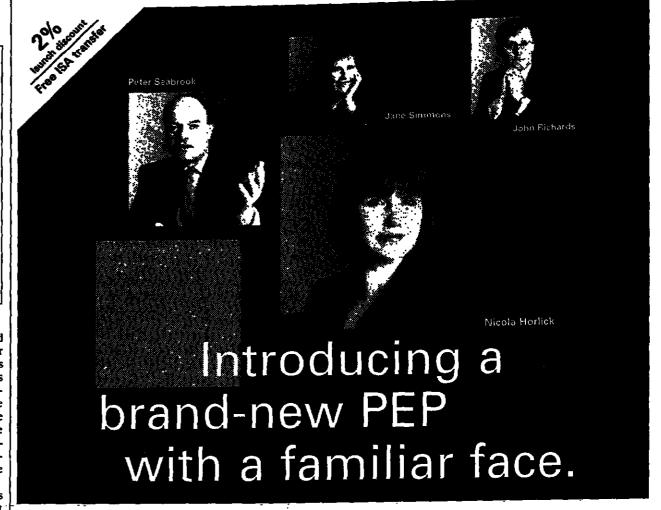
Just as interesting are the

investment trusts. For regular savings schemes, the surprise is dex-tracking fund, to take one how similar in cost unit trusts obvious example, but if it costs, and insurance company prodsay, the equivalent of 1.5 per ucts seem to be, once you have allowed for the value of the life cover you tend to get with the latter. For lump sums, the avcancelled out in the higher erage unit trust scheme is actually more expensive than the equivalent life product.

On all types of savings of steady, modest progress. As a scheme, however, investment trusts are appreciably less exproportions of a typical 10 or 25- pensive than either of the other investment trusts have to pay for costs has fallen over three years, to understand than unit trusts, But, in periods of high discounts, as now, they remain the vehicle of choice for the more

sophisticated investor. Take note, however, that the range of costs in the unit trust and investment trust sectors is wider than it is in life insurance - there are some very expensive trusts out there, even though the average cost may be lower. If the experience with life products is any guide, the effect of disclosure should be to narrow the range.

You only have to look at experience in the United States where mutual funds are materially cheaper on average than their equivalent here - to know that we have some way to go before we can declare that the consumer is yet king in this business. But at least we are movcomparisons between insurance ing in the right direction.



includes the country's best-known fund manager, Nicola Horlick.

Nicola has assembled a team with considerable experience and proven ability, among them Peter Seabrook, who will manage the fund, using an active, stockpicking approach. They will aim to deliver index-beating performance for investors, whatever the market conditions.

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that you would like? To receive the maximum pension available you would typically have to be part of the same company pension scheme for 40 years. Moreover, if you have changed your job, even once, it could dramatically reduce your pension.

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## Are we facing terminal failure?

Barclays Bank, the first card issuer to start giving customers cards with a year 2000 expiry date, says the new cards are failing at the rate of one a day.

The problem arises when retailer systems fail to recognise the cards as valid. Like other computer systems, they were originally programmed to read only the final two digits of any given year, and crash when confronted with a reading of

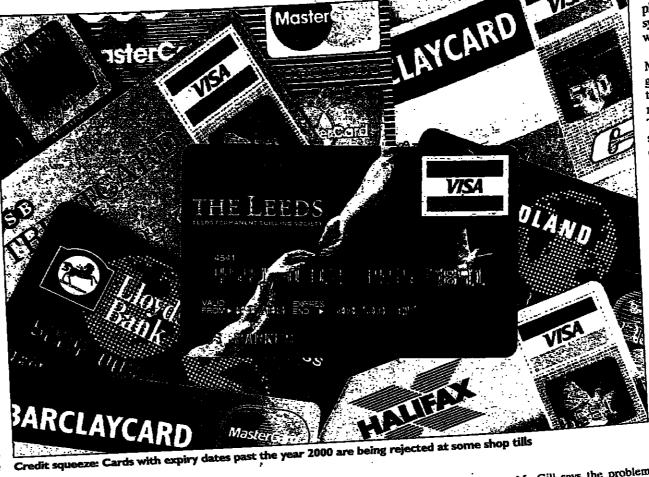
Visa and Mastercard's embargo on producing cards expiring in the year 2000 ended on October last year. Barclays started producing 00 cards immediately, and now has over 1 million in use. The bank has so far had about 350 complaints from cardholders who have had their 00 cards rejected in shops and other outlets round the world, including 30 complaints in January.

Most other card issuers are also distributing 00 cards now, although none started as soon as Barclays. About four in 10 of the Barclays complaints arose in October. "Systems are becoming more compliant as time goes on," says the bank's Kirsty

The big high street banks also supply their own credit card terminals to retailers, and have been busy updating those terminals to cope with the millennium bug for the past few years. Now, they say, all but a point of sale devices. When a tiny handful of systems should be able to accept 00 cards with no problem.

But American Express is refusing to start producing its own 00 cards yet because it fears retail outlets worldwide will not be ready to accept them.

With our new UK Ethical PEP, your



Express says: "I'm sure we'll issue year 2000 cards this year, but I don't know when. We want to make sure the merchants are ready to accept them in their merchant's system rejects a card, it doesn't say why. It just rejects it. We want to avoid that

happening. Abbey National will not start issuing 00 cards till June this year, when its own systems testing is complete and it can be

will not be rejected at point of sale. This has meant cutting the lifetime of its own cards to just 18 months - an expensive move for the bank.

NatWest started producing 00 credit cards about a month ago, and has since issued some 400,000, with no complaints so far. The bank has also been responsible for modifying the 170,000 terminals it has in shops and other retail outlets.

Last month two cases came

Atalia DaSilva of American "completely confident" cards to light where NatWest's modification of its terminals had failed. Both happened in Ikea branches, where customers' 00 cards were rejected, forcing staff to key in card details

NatWest's Nick Gill says: "The upgrade had been put through for the year 2000, but there was a problem with the software. We realised that we'd need to write a new bit of software for it, because it was a bespoke terminal."

Mr Gill says the problem affected fewer than 100 of the terminals NatWest is responsible for, all of which have now been successfully dealt with. He says the bank is ahead of its rivals on year 2000

compliance. Liz Phillips of the Credit Card Research Group says: "When you start issuing cards, you start finding the outlets where you're getting problems. It's often smaller retailers who've got a second-hand

terminal which may not have been made Millennium compliant. The good thing is that the system behind the terminals is working OK."

Gerard Long, manager of Midland's year 2000 programme says: "It's where the terminals are owned by the retailer that there's an issue. They should go to their systems supplier and ensure they get a compliant version. There's only a small number of those out there and they are being

Some believe there will be addressed." more problems for cardholders using their plastic overseas than for those in the UK. Erica Harper of Royal Bank of Scotland says: "I suppose the test will be when the holiday season arrives. Internationally, I think there's likely to be more problems. People have always been advised to take lots of ways of paying for things when they go away, but this year I think that will apply all the more."

Visa divides the world up into six regions, all of which it says are 99 per cent or 100 per cent 2000-compliant. Visa's Matthew Talbot says: "We don't see any particular problem even in the most far-flung places. In the smaller, more remote, places, where Visa might be accepted, often you'll find a manual swipe machine, and no electronics at all."

If you should find your own 00 card rejected in a shop or restaurant, the owner should be able to phone whichever bank supplied his terminal to get authorisation, take a manual imprint of the card and put the transaction through

## Don't bank on the Net, yet



ROBIN AMLÔT

INTERNET INVESTOR

By and large I have steered clear of getting into the technicalities of computers, modems, software and the paraphernalia which is involved in surfing the net for several reasons, not least because this is not a column about computers and I am by no means an expert on such

Like most people I switch the kit on and expect it all to work as it should. Thus to be confronted by the following message was dispiriting: "Netscape's network connection was refused by the server. The server may not be accepting connections or may be busy. Try connecting again

later. This is software-speak for: "The number you have called does not know that you are waiting, nor does it care. Try again some time and have a

nice day!" So what? Well, I find it a matter of some concern to be confronted by such a message while investigating the options available for banking on the internet. It makes a mockery of the advantages one would rehearse for being able to bank via one's own computer in one's own time. It would be like turning up to the bank to pay money in or cash a cheque to see a notice on the door saying: "We're closed but we'll be open some time later. Come

back then." In fact, it happened to me last Sunday night, when one

might reasonably assume that the website in question would not be overly busy. In fairness, I should also report when I tried again the following morning I had no difficulty in getting on to the site. But that is

not the point. For web banking to take off it has got to be available to the customer and the potential customer when he, she, you or I want it. Not when it suits the bank to offer it.

If the reason I could not get on to the site was because it was too busy then the bank in question needs to expand its facilities. If the reason was because of some kind of computer failure then they need to improve the back-up systems. The institution in question? It was Royal Bank of

cotland's website. Admittedly, electronic direct banking is in its infancy, at least in the UK. The first bank to offer online services was American. Wells Fargo Bank launched its online services in 1989 and internet banking in May 1995. It now has around 200,000 online accounts.

For financial institutions facing increasing competition from the likes of supermarket banking it is a logical step to become a "Martini" business anytime, anyplace, anywhere.

It was only in June last year that the Royal Bank of Scotland's internet banking service went live, becoming the second big UK financial institution to offer banking on

the web, beaten by two by the Nationwide Building Society, which launched its online service in May 1997.

So far, these two remain the only web-based accounts on offer from large British financial institutions. However, the other banks are not far behind. Several offer PC banking via their own "intranet" operations, while TSB runs an online service through the service provider Compuserve which Lloyds is building on to estab-

lish internet banking. By January 1998, after six months in operation, Royal Bank of Scotland's service "direct banking by PC" had 10,000 customers. The bank had originally planned for the service to be free for each customer's first six months, after which a charge of £1.50 per month was to be made. However, the charge has now been withdrawn and the service

Nationwide Building Society's recently redesigned Online Banking site was always designed to be fee-free and allows you to run a FlexAccount and access CashBuilder card and InvestDirect accounts online. I will be returning to the subject of just how these accounts operate and what you can and cannot do banking online in the future.

www.nationwide.co.uk Royal Bank of Scotland:

60

### SPOTLIGHT ON: CREDIT SUISSE MANAGED PENSION

The product: The Crédit Suisse wants for arranging it. Unusu-Managed Pension Portfolio. The deal: Invest over £100,000 and Crédit Suisse will tailor, at the investor's behest, a personalised investment strategy for the pension fund. The product, a self-invested personal pension, is particularly aimed at those who want to put off buying an annuity while drawing some income from their fund, a facility known as "income drawdown". Plus points: Charges are clean, transparent and reasonable: just a 1 per cent annual charge, reducing to 0.45 per cent on larger amounts. The only other fee is

ally, there are no extra charges for using income drawdown.

Winterthur Life is the biggest and most experienced provider of self-invested pensions on the market. This pension, one of the first fruits of the merger of Winterthur and Crédit Suisse, allows unusual access to the Swiss bank, that favourite of the super-rich. To use drawdown without

losing money, high returns are required. This product allows investors at least a fighting chance of achieving them. Drawbacks and risks: The product has a high minimum, so whatever the financial adviser the chance to use a tailored Marks out of five: Four.

investment strategy is only for those with big savings. Nick Bamford, an expert from Informed Choice, the specialist pensions adviser, points out that it cannot be used to start up a pension fund from scratch.

If investors do use income drawdown, there is still a substantial risk of losing money. Crédit Suisse will have to keep up its good record of performance to make it worthwhile. If they don't, they can always be ditched. Verdict: A valuable opportunity

to tap the expertise of Crédit Suisse (but only for some of us).

money will be invested in companies seen to be making a positive just concerned contribution to society and not in with making your those viewed as having a harmful effect on the world. You also stand money grow to benefit from amongst the lowest charges around and the expertise of a fund management team with a record of success in the UK equity market. And whether you want to invest a lump sum or start a regular savings plan, you'li receive a 1% discount if you apply now. So why not consult your IFA or call us today? o8oo 33 33 54 Standard Life UK Ethical PEP. Apply before 2 April to beat the taxman. Phone lines open Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm, Saturday, Sunday 10am – 4pm. STANDARD LIFE Investment has never been simpler

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## A no-shareholder pension? The benefits are mutual

A wise choice of personal pension can make a big difference to your income in retirement, and a mutual company may well offer the best deal, writes James Moore

Looking to buy a personal pension? It is probably the most important financial commitment you can make - apart from a

1. 15° - 1.

And, just as with mortgages, suggests evidence collected by the City watchdog the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), people get a better deal with mutual firms.

Mutuals have no shareholders, so have no need to pay dividends to them. Building societies are owned by their savers and borrowers; mutual insurers belong to their policyholders.

The theory is that, because they have no shareholders, mutual insurers should pay out more to policy-holders than their equivalent, shareholder-owned proprietary companies when a pension policy matures.

When the PIA looked at the performance of personal pensions sold by mutual and proprietary companies, it found that on average, this was true.

fund available: with profits, and unit-

With-profits policies are the traditional method of sharing out investment profits, with a bonus added to the basic benefits of the policy every year. Some money is held over in good years to pay out in bad years, which smoothes out stock market ups and



There are two main types of pension Proof positive: In theory, mutuals, without shareholders to pay profits to, should pay out more to pension policyholders. In practice, recent figures from the City's watchdog show they do available: with profits and write

is £50,228 for the 10 mutuals surveyed. The mutuals out-perform proprietaries, pro-18 proprietaries managed just £48,129 - 4.4

The figures are based on the PLA's assumption of 9 per cent growth each year. The difference comes in the charges levied by the companies,

Unit-linked policies are more variable PIA figures show that the average and directly reflect the value of a pool of estimated value of a 25-year pension plan investments. Again, however, the figures, into which £60 per month had been paid based on the same assumptions, show

viding an average payout of 1.9 per cent higher, with £49,562 compared with

The PIA bluntly puts mutuals' unitlinked policies' better performance down to "either a higher expected degree of efficiency, or lower profit margins". Unsurprisingly, the PIA's research has

not been well received by the proprietary companies. John Bowman, a director at Commercial Union Life, points out that the competitive personal pension market pushes down charges and improves margins for investors.

"It is wrong to say that just because you are a mutual you will do better ... and it is an over-simplification to look at mutuals is not enough to be mutual. You have to at companies on a case by case basis. We expect to compete with any mutual."

Norwich Union demutualised last year. Philip Scott, the group director of life and pensions, says: "Our fund is a mutual fund within Norwich Union, so there is no payout to shareholders from it. We make the money from charges. They don't all work benefits of their members and focus on that, Do like that. You have to look at individual

policyholders in mutual companies pause for thought before voting to convert in the hope of a payout, should the option be offered, as happened in the case of Nation-

If mutuals are efficient and well run they plans to list because we don't need to," says Tom King, group director at Standard Life.

But he does warn against automatically assuming that mutuals will be better: "It capitalisation to invest in shares."

Nigel Webb, a senior manager at Equitable Life, which performed better than mutuals will be able to stay mutual in a any other company in the PIA's survey, says: "We believe strongly that the benefits of a seen."

well-run mutual are very significant. "If mutuals do run their business for the Points for choosing a pension they have a very strong message to tell."

they are doing better. They may also make benefits of which the PIA found evidence, remains to be seen.

Like football chairmen saying they have every confidence in managers before sacking them, mutuals tend to insist that wide Building Society when a proposal to they are happy with their status until they demutualise put by rebel members was announce their intention to convert.

Some believe that whatever they say, "Proprietary companies have to pay part when the global insurance market be-of their with-profits funds to shareholders. when the global insurance market be-comes a reality and competition hots up, mutuals will have to convert to release the should outperform them. We have no capital they need in order to compete and

Charles Thompson, Scottish Widows' operations and appointed actuary, says: There is quite a lot of evidence that suggests that mutuals have outperformed and proprietaries like this. You have to look be a well-run mutual company that has the proprietaries. Scottish Widows has no plans to convert.

"But, as a personal view, whether global market place - that remains to be

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But the mutuals say the figures confirm to remain mutual, and provide the type of They, or an independent financial adviser, should be able to provide you with these. Look at their record - this does not guarantee future performance, but a good record long term is a reasonable indicator. Take out a waiver of premium cover. This will pay your premiums if you are unable to work for a period of time, and is rela-

tively inexpensive. Pick a plan that suits your needs. If you feel your employment is relatively stable it may be better to choose a plan that has less flexibility but which will pay out more when you retire. If not, choose a plan that allows you to suspend premiums without

■ Go straight to your bank or building society, or a company you have used before for other products.

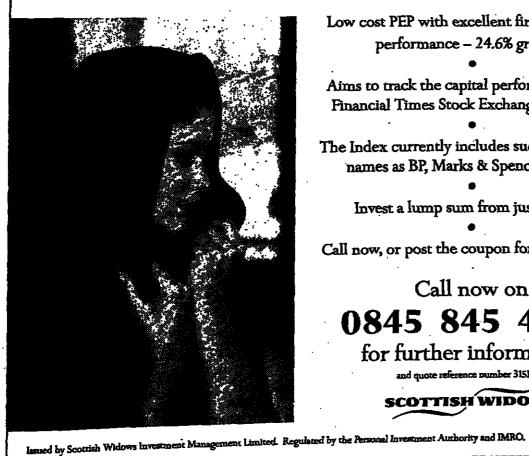
■ Necessarily go for the cheapest option. You may lose out on performance. Look for a good all-round package.

Take out a personal pension if you are in an occupational scheme. If you wish to increase your contributions, take out an additional voluntary contribution plan or use another savings vehicle.

MUTUAL VS PROPRIETARY Mutual **Property** Average illustrative maturity value Unit Linked £48,629 £49,562 With Profits £48,129 £50,228 Maximum illustrative Maturity Value Unit Linked £52,200 257,100 With Profits £57,100 Minimum Illustrative Maturity Value Unit Linked £46,700 £43,400 With Profits £43,400 £46,700 \* 25 year personal pension plan, £60 per month premium. Source: PIA Life Assurance Disclosure: Three Years on

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المكذا من الأصل



## Sweetest diesel of all

Where's the truth? When does factual melt into apocryphal? Follow a filthy taxi as it labours up a hill, and you'll be thankful for your car heater's air recirculation control, if it has one. If it doesn't, you'll hate diesels even more. You'll think of them as slow, smelly, noisy things, their owners selfish creatures concerned only with saving money, and blow the rest of us.

Even some quite new diesels, cars that are pleasant to drive and engender an almost evangelical applied logic among their owners, can prove surprisingly stinky to those stuck behind them in traffic. But there is hope for the diesel's social rehabilitation - or maybe just habilitation - so that it can take its place on equal terms with today's squeaky-clean petrol engines.

The current buzz-phrase is "common-rail direct injection", which refers to the way the fuel is supplied to and squirted into the engine with a precision hitherto unknown when such high injection pressures are involved. It's claimed to make diesels cleaner, quieter, more responsive, more petrol-engine-like and yet more economical. The Fiat Group is the first to put such an engine into production - so far, in a version of the new Alfa 156 that isn't coming to the UK; the Peugeot-Citroen Group follows later in the year. Others aren't far behind.

In the meantime, try this, The Audi A6 you see here has the most advanced diesel engine you can buy in Britain. It's a V6, for a start. which is currently unique among diesels. It has four valves per cylinder like a good modern petrol engine, it has direct inju tronic management (to overcome a direct injection engine's usual percussive racket), and

Road test: John Simister drives the Audi A6 2.5 TFI

delivers a hefty 150bhp from its 2.5 litres. That's only 15bhp down from the 2.4-litre petrol V6 also offered in the A6 range, and at 229lb ft its pulling ability exceeds even that of the grandest A6's 2.8-litre petrol engine. It has catalytic converter, it smells and smokes hardly at all; all it lacks, for now, is this common-rail stuff.

Audi doesn't label this car a V6 on its tail, merely a 2.5 TDI, as it did the old-shape Ao with its five-cylinder engine. This modesty is excessive, because the engine delivers a whole new experience. Start it up, and it sounds at first like a miniaturised luxury coach: deep and

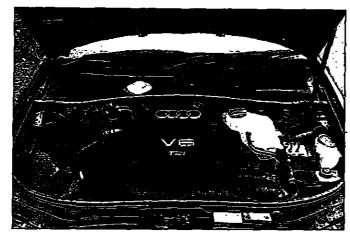
"cackle". Drive off, let it warm up; soon you'll be aware merely of a distant V6 hum, deeper than in a petrol engine but still a creamy voice. And that's the point. This diesel, unlike most,

has a voice, a sound that connects with the brain's pleasure centres in a way a good petrol readily up to speed, together make this the most undiesel-like diesel I have ever tried.

It does all the usual turbo-diesel things - pulls rigorously from low speeds, uses amazingly little fuel, encourages a low-revs, low-stress approach to driving - yet it also spins smoothly and speeds six-cylindered, but still with an overlay of diesel to petrol-like velocities. Like most diesels its us-

able engine-speed range is relatively narrow, but the monstrous torque makes possible very longlegged gear ratios. And there are six of them.

If all diesels could be as sweet and effortless as this, I could be a convert. One day they probably will be. For now, it's a good reason to buy an Audi A6, along with the futuristically sculptural good looks, the comfort, the inviting interior and the feeling of high-quality permanence. engine can. That, and the way the engine blips It's not perfect - the steering is too light at speed, the doors spring too violently into their held-open positions, the photochromic anti-dazzle rear-view mirror wipes out the detail of what's behind you at night - but it's thoroughly desirable. Here's a diesel with all the advantages and apparently, without the snags, wrapped up in the best big saloon you can currently buy.



**Specifications** Prices: £26,320, or £28,284 for SE version. Engine: 2,4% cc V6, 24 valves, direct-injection turbo-diesel, 150bhp at 4,000rpm. Transmission: five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive. Performance top speed I35mph, 0-60 in 9.5sec, 36-41 mpg. Rivals

BMW 525tds: £26,200. Slightly slower and thirstler than Audi, Citroën XM 2.5TD Exclusive:

£28,555. Only four cylinders but colossal pulling power. Engagingly odd.

Mercedes-Benz E300D Classic: £28.040, Base-trim version of desirable diesel Benz. not so fast but will last for ever. Vauxhall Omega 2.5TD Elite: £27,495. Plushest and priciest of BMW diesel-powered Omegas. A BMW is better. Volvo \$70 TDI CD: £27,775. Grandest diesel 570, uses old but

Pleasant, but lacks German build



### **GAVIN** GREEN

Just as in the Eighties nobody admitted to voting Tory but everybody did, so we are now equally hypocritical about our cars. Most of us would love to use public transport, if only it were better/ cheaper/ cleaner/ safer/not used by smelly psychotics/ not managed by Richard Branson. Until such time, we'll stick with our cars, thank you. A new survey done by

Lex, the leasing company, highlights what a disingenuous bunch we are. Forty-five per cent of motorists said they'd love to use their cars less, if only public transport were better
- up from 23 per cent in 1988. And yet, even if congestion got twice as bad, only 7 per cent of commuters said that if push came to shove they'd switch to public transport. For school runners and shoppers, the figure is even lower (4 and 5 per cent respectively). Yet these very same people demand better public transport, presumably so that other drivers can nse iL

Personally, I'm not in the least surprised by drivers' reluctance to "go public", but I am somewhat perplexed at the reasons why they want to stay clear of rail and Routemasters. One reason, apparently, is that most drivers surveyed actually enjoyed "chore" journeys. Sixty-six percent of the 1,287 motorists interviewed said they liked driving to work, and six out of ten drivers said they enjoyed school runs. If that's true, then there is surely no hope of prising people out of their cars. Within a fortnight of that

Lex survey, another one landed on my desk (bow do these people ever have time to run a business?). This

one, however, proved rather more instructive. Whereas the great British motorist's views on motoring are inevitably skewed by social mores and the need to "say the right thing", you can't get away from plain facts and figures. And the Lex Vehicle Leasing Reliability Survey is a straight mechanical reliability report on the 88,048 vehicles in that

company's vast fleet. It could well be the most representative reliability survey of them all because, unlike the Which? and Top Gear JD Power surveys, forms are not filled out by moaning Minnies who selfselect themselves to air their grievances. Equally, unlike the JD Power survey. dealer support cannot twist the results: it's just down to the car, in this case all L-to-R-registration vehicles.

There are a number of big surprises. First, cars are getting less reliable, just as manufacturers try to pretend otherwise. You now have a one-in-four chance of getting stranded during the year. Last year, you had a one-in-five chance.

Japanese cars built in Britain are much less reliable than Japanese cars built in Japan. This makes common sense to you or me, but it's certainly not what Nissan and Toyota have been propagating. Also, the second most reliable make of car in use in Britain is a Jaguar. I personally find this amazing, not least because a couple of years ago Jaguars were about as trustworthy as Bill Clinton's marriage vow. They are now more than four times as reliable as Fords, whose "best practice" reliability standards Jaguar has allegedly been copying. The most reliable make

of car is Mitsubishi, which is about the only Japanese maker who hasn't set up shop in Britain. Surely this is no coincidence. Citroën is the maker of the least reliable vehicles on British roads (although my fatherin-law's five-year-old ZX has never let him down), followed by Alfa Romeo (no surprise). Third worst maker is Rover, whose alleged and much hyped reliability renaissance - first under Honda's guidance, now BMW's - has proved to be about as believable as views on giving up motoring.

### **Burning the daylight oil**

Thinking of buying a diesel? Use your calculator first, says Roger Bell, after a year with an oil burner

Are you doing your bit for the ozone layer? Join the club. I took the eco-friendly plunge a year ago. Goodbye Alfa Romeo, bello Peugeot 306D Turbo. I even persuaded myself I'd be better off. I already admired the 306, with its suspension that absorbs bumps as well as it handles corners. Gripes? Mine leaks (an inch of water in the an Aston Martin Vantage in the same gear. footwell isn't funny). Otherwise, no serious complaints, so let's talk diesel.

The bad news is that most diesels cost more than comparable petrols, and many still need frequent oil/filter changes - every 6,000 miles for the Peugeot - which adds to the costs. The good news is that diesels like the 306 should hold their value better than petrol siblings.

You're on safer ground comparing fuel consumption. My 306 averages 47 mpg.

Somehow I expected a lot more from a

brand new. It also had left-hand drive,

BMW, but then, this one was hardly

so maybe I was asking for trouble. I

know the 518 wasn't the best BMW

ever built, but this Y-registered one

before needing a repair. Luckily - or

Brixton who said he knew all about

unluckily - I had a mechanic friend in

BMWs and could sort it out. The thing

was though, every little job seemed to

cost at least £70. I'd look through the

bill and it was things like a washer at £5

which bumped the cost up. I calculated

that within six months I'd spent more

than the purchase price of the car

By far the most embarrassing

incident involved me and a girlfriend

starting to get amorous - the driver's

seat broke, which ended any further

developments. For a while, a black

plastic bin-liner full of old clothes

behind the seat kept it propped up. Of

purely on repairs.

only seemed to run for a day or so

46.3. The comparable petrol 1.6 gives only Yet it does 120 mph and 57.6 mpg. Beat 36.5 mpg, but as derv is no cheaper than that. unleaded, the savings are modest.

What may trigger another diesel boom is the introduction of advanced directinjection diesels. The latest car to get DI is Renault's Mégane. Parsimony gives diesels a range advantage: some will exceed 800 miles on a tankful.

All the majors are working on DI to improve economy, emissions and performance. But the usual, horsepower-based speed - are poor guides to a diesel's ki's Alto heads the list. verve. Seat's 58mpg Ibiza TDi will accelerate from 50 to 70 mph in top faster than So will Rover's cracking 220 SDi. My 306 also impresses with mid-range zap. What offends me is the filthy black smoke it belches when I put my foot down.

Diesels are good on some emissions, eg CO2, because they burn less fuel. But dated or badly tuned ones can be very dirty. On all-round merit, VW sets the standard for Peugeot's coming direct-injection motors. The new Golf's catalyst-cleaned 110 bhp 1.9 Turbo gives out no smoke, no diesel

MY WORST CAR: AINSLEY HARRIOT'S BMW 518

course, the cost of a brand-new

hand one from a scrap yard.

replacement was more than the car was

Which is, now I come to think of it,

worth, so I ended up getting a second-

where I should have left the BMW.

My theory is that it must have been

involved in a lot of accidents before I

which squares with the official Euromix of smell and virtually no CO or HC emissions.

Although most diesels suffer from coldstart clatter, the good ones sound no worse than discreetly gruff when under way, and mine is happiest on a motorway.

I do occasionally rue the switch to diesel. Then I'll do a long run, and I'm at peace with the decision. Tempted? First do your sums. If low all-in costs are a priority, consider this: Parker's price guide says the eight cheapest cars to run over a three-year/ performance yardsticks - 0-60mph and top 30,000-mile period all run on petrol. Suzu-

Diesel pros ...

More economical than petrol. Extends range between fill-ups. No ignition system to go wrong. Good ones hold value well. Good acceleration from turbos. Unfussy motorway cruising. CO2 reduced.

and cons

More expensive to buy. Need servicing more often. Non-turbos sluggish. Fuel messy and smelly. Rough, clattery idling. Less refinement than petrol. Sooty exhaust. Downmarket image.

got hold of it. Everything rattled, and

washing-machine banging about on an

water, fitting a suppressor for a radio

interference, and at least once a week

it refused to start. I kept saying to

myself, this is a BMW, so it must be

OK. I dearly wanted to be cool, but

that was difficult with steam billowing

That BMW was a pig of a car. I

part-exchanged it for a Fiat Mirafiori,

and I must be the first driver in history

to say they preferred an old Fiat to a

BMW. The whole experience has put

me off BMWs for life. That's why I

Ainsley Harriot's new book 'Meals in

accompanies his seven- part series on

Minutes' (BBC Worldwide, £14.99)

BBC2. He was speaking to James

the engine behaved like an old

uneven floor. The sills leaked in

only seemed to cause more

from the bonnet.

drive a Mercedes.

### MOTORING

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Voice personals now appear in THE EYE on a Saturday and also every Sunday in the Real Life section.



AT HOME: CLOCKS

## Time flies when you have to be in three places at once

Here's a hands-on approach to timekeeping,

Rosalind Russell

says, with designs in minute detail.

Some people need three clocks to tell the time simultaneously in London, New York and Sydney, either because they are so busy and important, or because they re too lazy to work out the time difference. But then time

Especially to people like Sylvester Stallone, who has a gold-faced clock covering the a wooden base and have a entire ceiling of the breakfast room of his Miami waterfront home, described by a breathless admirer as "neo-classical". It's certainly different, but hard to

say if it's just what you need in the design reminds them of the morning above your Mar- New England. mite and toast.

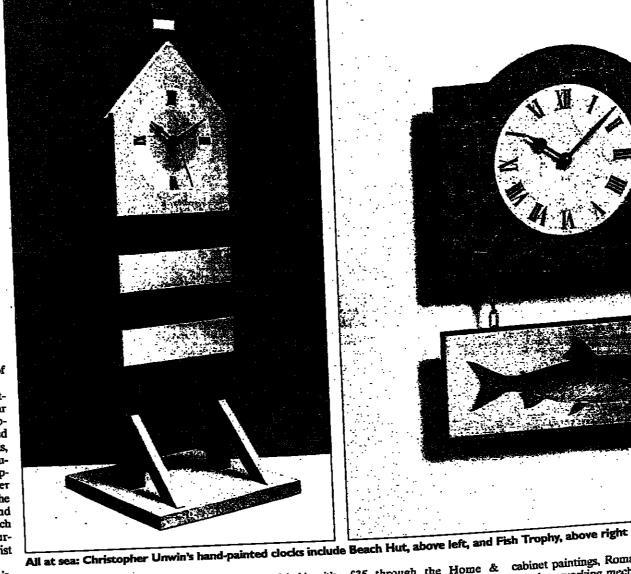
Nottingham-based portrait artist Christopher Unwin has been making hand-painted clocks for three years, an artistic sideline that turned into a business. He has a range of designs which include a stripy cat in front of a lighthouse, a seagull sitting on the sand, polar bears, and different sailing ships, but he'll accept commissions to paint anything you like, including a picture of your

own home. He has already painted a client's country cottage on one clock. The clock casings are painted in a combination of acrylic and emulsion paints on cracked distressed finish. The maritime clocks - and freestanding beach-hut clocks have proved popular with Americans, possibly because

One American visiting Nottingham from his US nuclear base in Norfolk saw Christopher's work and commissioned him to paint a ship. Not Polaris, disappointingly, but a particular sailing ship which he supplied a picture of. The buyer was equally particular about the exact shade of background colour. "They do like to match up the clock with the curtains," comments the artist

Another current commission has come from an actor appearing at the Nottingham Playhouse. His clock will feature figures from the Commedia del'Arte; harlequin-type figures in ornate costume, which pre-date pantomime, and which require careful research.

Christopher Unwin's clocks start at £54, but commissions are negotiable, depending on the



complexity of design. He displays vw.emnet.co.uk/painted clocks. Almost all the leading design

shops now feature a range of clocks to match contemporary smart floor-standing, batteryor quirky furnishings. The Art operated clock with metal legs Room's spring mail order brochure includes the popular ural wood or painted blue, floppy clock, inspired by Sal- which wouldn't look out of vador Dali's melting timepieces.

his clocks on the website designed to sit on a shelf over four inches deep. It costs £79.95 plus postage.

BhS have introduced a and face surround either in natplace in a loft-style show home;

Made of resin, in bright blue, it's £35 through the Home & cabinet paintings, Roman nu-Lighting catalogue. More retro merals, a working mechanism is Debenhams' mock tortoise- and a traditional moon crown-

square, at £15. If tempus rarely fugits for you, you can always build your own grandfather clock. Just 35cm when assembled, it's the grandfather of all jigsaw puzzles, with foam-backed pieces, ornate

shell clock, either round or piece. It costs £39.95 from the postage.

But for those who really do have to know the time in three cities at once, the Maritime Company offers the Bristol Shipping Company clocks, three clocks showing the time Company, 01993 770450.

in New York, London and Victoria on a hand-painted wooden background, for £69.50 plus Look

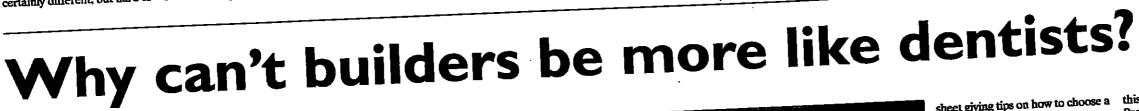
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**Jave** 

propi

\*: -

Christopher Unwin, 0115 9856 389; Art Room, 01993 770444; BhS, 0990 24700; Debenhams. 0171 408 4444; Bits & Pieces. 01379 649 629; The Maritime



Ginetta Vedrickas wonders why it is so difficult to get work done on your home without having a nervous breakdown.

If only builders were more like dentisis. Everyone swears that they have the most fantastic dentist but people only swear about their builders. Each time I hire someone I vow not to be fooled by that outwardly charming "renovator" who reads the same newspaper as me and is kind to children and animals. Then as I survey the half-finished "improvements", the mounting quotations and re-live the arguments with someone whose charms have long faded I realise it's ending in tears again.

Are you as gullible when getting a man in dungarees to do what you

Anita heard about Harry at a coffee morning: "When I found he advertised through my local NCT newsletter I thought he must be good." Anita wanted to restore her Victorian terrace, which was laid out as two flats, and needed a skilled person for the extensive work ahead. "When Harry came to give a quote he spotted a "Coal not Dole" sticker and we got talking about politics. We seemed to share the same ideals. What really impressed me was the contract he produced giving

timescales and payment dates." Anita was also influenced by Harry's attitude to her child. "He made a big effort with Kieran, who adored him in return. Harry schedule and more jobs were going



Saintly plumber Stephen Greene, who comes recommended and prefers his customers recommended, too

safe and there wasn't too much dust around. I believed he'd be sensitive to our needs so I gave him the job."

Anita paid regularly, as the contract specified, but found Harry's deadlines slipped. "We even took out a loan to keep up our payments but as the months went by it became clear that he wasn't keeping to his

Harry's child-friendly approach disappeared along with his deadlines and Anita and toddler Kieran were left with half-built walls: "The final disaster was the kitchen, which I'd decided to adapt, but I let Harry persuade me to have a new hand-built one." Although Anita paid as much as buying one from John Lewis, the resulting kitchen is fraught with problems. The extractor fan is in the

wrong place, the sink and cooker survey of their members giving them don't even fit. It breaks my heart every time I look at it," says Anita. 11 different trades. Unsurprisingly the And the charming Harry? "He became increasingly sarcastic and would sulk if I asked him to put things right. Work was supposed to

before we could use our kitchen. It ended very badly." Which? recently carried out a

finish in June but it was November

Photograph: Rui Xavier details of over 5,000 tradespeople and

most satisfied customers had used the tradesperson before and in contrast to Anita's experience the next most satisfied group employed someone recommended to them. Some trades did better than others but general builders and gas fitters came out worst. Which? has produced a fact-

sheet giving tips on how to choose a tradesperson and get jobs done properly. The survey found that trades associations can't guarantee the work standards of their members or offer protection if things go wrong.

Wendy thought her choice of builder was perfect. How could you helpline for legal advice and emergo wrong employing a friend's husband? With limited funds and a Victorian terrace to renovate, Wendy outlined her priorities and the builder quoted a price - £15,000. and hates tea. Steve never advertis-Work began but Wendy found that nothing was properly finished and the friend's husband kept demanding more money. "It got to the point where I considered I'd paid enough for the jobs I'd originally specified but which still weren't done. I even paid an extra £10,000, which he claimed wasn't enough, says Wendy.

The erstwhile friendly husband turned nasty. "We had a massive argument and he threatened me with violence. It was horrible. After that contrast to the cornucopia of crafts-I dreaded bumping into him." Before Wendy could change her locks the builder took revenge by removing lots of things from the house including a set of double doors. Kitchen floor tiles and worktops were it but the lights dim when you switch also missing. And the friend? "We haven't spoken since," says Wendy.

The Office of Fair Trading received 13,538 complaints about substandard home maintenance, repairs and improvements between January and March 1997, the most recently available figures. The OFT wants to see a register of approved traders who are committed to high standards and consumer redress rather than a reliance on codes of practice. A conference scheduled for later this year will discuss the use of a high-profile logo, and independent arbitration if things go wrong.

An insurance policy launched

this week by Home Buyers Legal Protection gives up to £25,000 of legal cover for £50 if you move and discover problems arising from developers, builders, surveyors and even solicitors. In addition to legal cover you have access to a 24-hour

gency repairs. Stephen Greene shines as an example of a true British tradesperson. a brilliant plumber, reliable, es and prefers his customers to come recommended as well. He warns against using plumbers "because they're cheap" and bemoans the fact that "even your 80-year-old granny can set herself up as a gas fitter." He believes regulation is having positive effects. "Get a recommendation by all means, but make sure they are recognised and will give you their Corgi number."

Steve's halo shines brighter in men who have driven me to seek cognitive therapy. There was Thunderclap, who brought Miss Singh, his dog, to run underfloor cable while he rewired. She managed on the kettle. Dave, the "skilled renovator" who did nothing himself but employed teams of boys who didn't understand that paint goes on the wooden parts but not the glass bits. Lastly dear Punch, whose frequent Amsterdam visits were becoming ever costlier, forcing him to make a midnight call the night before laying the patio to double his quote (thanks for the pile of mouldy bricks you left.) Bitter, moi? Boys, this one's for you.

Which?' fact-sheet LRBUIL: 0645-123580; OFT's Home Improvements leaflet: 0870-6060321; Home Buyers Legal Protection LTD: 01968-678989.

### Is this warranty not worth the paper it's written on? promised to ensure the house was wrong." The Council's role as both regulatory In April the NHBC says it is bringing in a

The NHBC celebrates an anniversary this week; but many homeowners don't feel like celebrating. Penny Jackson examines why the scheme is defective.

Owners of new homes feel they buy peace of mind when it comes with a warranty from the National House-Building Council. Builders' brochures typically claim: "We create homes for people who rightly expect high standards of design and build quality... and we offer the NHBC 10-year warranty." But what does that mean to someone who finds themselves in a home riddled with defects?

As the NHBC celebrates this week the opening of its five millionth home covered of its services after claims last year that it was failing to represent consumers. More was failing to represent consumers. More by the scheme, so it is engaged in a review

than 1,000 people have sought help from the National Association of New Home Owners set up three years ago to represent dissatisfied buyers.

Buyers who thought the warranty was a guarantee found that not to be the case. The warranty says that a house has been built to certain standards, that in the first two years it is the builder's responsibility to sort out any problems and after that it is only obliged to put right major structural faults. It is in fact an insurance policy. Clearly there is a yawning gap between what buyers expect the warranty to mean and the

reality of its cover. The insurance ombudsman's bureau, which has been dealing with complaints, has emphasised that the NHBC warranty is not a guarantee covering all potential problems. Walter Merricks, the insurance ombudsman, is adamant about the responsibility of the insurer. "This is an area with which most people are unfamiliar and insurers must make it clear what a warranty does or doesn't cover".

veloper, the discovery that even major building defects are not the responsibility of the vey found that 30 per cent of solicitors have not been passing on full details to clients and it has now brought out a home-buyers guide which, it says, clearly shows what

But what particularly disturbs those with unresolved problems is how a flawed building can be passed by an NHBC inspector. Nearly two years ago. Timothy Flood moved into his house in Caerphilly three months later than promised and a week after his building society judged it unfit to live in. The builder did the minimum to meet their requirements. Even so we moved with a 4ft hole in the front of the house and we have had nothing but misery since. The windows still leak, the bath is cracked, the line was never replaced and the garage where we stored our furniture leaked so badly that everything was ruined."

Jackie Bennett bought her three-bed-Given that the small print of the war-

purchaser either by a solicitor or by the desnagging period has elapsed and the NHBC warranty doesn't cover windows. "They are council is not surprising. An NHBC surdensation runs down the inside of the window into the frames which are rotting. They have already been replaced once but now the glazing company has gone bust and the developers say it is not their problem. I was even told what do you expect for £60,000?" What upsets me is that it was never right from the beginning. Some plumbing was also faulty and a leak caused so much damage that if it hadn't been for the line my washing machine would have fallen through the floor. How could that have met NHBC

"They are not alone in suspecting a reluctance of the Council to put pressure on dilatory builders even within the first two years when they have a clear obligation. Chris Lorentzen, who founded the Association of New Home Owners and has dealt with thousands of disgruntled owners, believes what is needed is an impartial and accountable body. "The NHBC is funded by the construction industry."

الملذا من الدمل

and warranty body is seen by some as far from ideal. Gary Sinclair, a consulting structural engineer, says he has seen builders hide behind the NHBC screen if something is queried. "Supervision of detail is a problem because they think they have blanket cover and it tempts them to cut corners. Defective work becomes hidden until eventually it emerges as an insurance claim." Other professionals who work on sites talk of rarely seeing inspectors. They say some inspectors simply accept the word of the site manager that work has been done properly and that if something needs doing will tick it as a job done and take it on trust that the builder will do it.

However, the NHBC says it inspects every new home it registers for warranty purposes on average seven times and where it provides building control services this increases to 11. There are, though, no spokesman for the council says that inshould be logged. Warranties are withheld. ing its five millionth celebrations.

site manager's accreditation scheme, externally validated, reviewable and based on performance.

Some 1.7 million homes are covered by the warranty and last year, of the 24,000 inquiries made, half received site visits. One third were found valid, another third invalid and a third valid under conciliation procedures. But Stephen Hawksworth knows how badly things can go wrong. Nearly 10 years after moving into his new house in Gloucester it is unsaleable since it could require as much as £60,000 spending on it. After his builder refused to do any more repairs, he says the NHBC encouraged him to go to conciliation rather than take legal action. Now after two unsatisfactory conciliation hearings, he is pinning his hopes on an independent assessor.

An NHBC spokesman says it is familiar with the case. "It is extremely complicated." The matter has been brought to the statutory requirements for site visits. A attention of Nick Rayusford, the construction minister. Perhaps not quite the spectors make spot checks and all defects sort of interest the NHBC has in mind dur-

## Looking forward to the Millennium with a new way of living

The Millennium will bring not just that Dome, but also new housing that aims to be socially and environmentally aware. Andrew Mylius explains.

The contents of the Millennium Dome remain a mystery to all but Peter Mandelson and a few of his close advisers. But Londoners who like the idea of having the Dome for a neighbour could be moving into the new homes months before the Dome itself opens for business.

Millennium Village, a model housing project of 1,377 Millennium Dome, Anyone who wants to see what brownfield development, architectural sustainability, organic architecture, "intelligent" building, holistic design or social responsibility looks like, should

watch closely: construction carefully planned public trans- the advantages afforded by the and use values. They must also energy consumption by half starts in October and the first homes should be ready for occupation by the middle of next

The scheme has been master planned by veteran architect Ralph Erskine, best known in this country for the innovative and socially sensitive Byker housing estate in Newcastle and the Ark. an environmentally sophisticated office beside the M4 in Hammersmith, London. He is being supported by acting architects Hunt Thompson, the Moat and Ujima housing associations, and the construction/developer groups are Countryside Properties and Tayfor Woodrow. Tom Barker, consultant on product development for the scheme who is managing director of engineers DCAb. says: "There's a satellite of experts buzzing around Erskine".

At first sight there is a strikdwellings, will rise on the site of ing resemblance to that most an old gasworks just south of the English of urban phenomena, the garden-city, born 100 years ago. The completed Millennium Village will contain 20 hectares of park, gardens and allotments. Housing is clus- tle McCarthy, advising on sen according to their embodtered into sub-communities; environmental issues, the ied energy values - that use of materials in construction, and we're living in an age when traffic will be minimal thanks to scheme promises to underpin consumed in producing them - Millennium Village aims to cut it's achievable.

port; the scale is intimate.

Yet the new village should not suffer from Hampstead Garden Suburb's ghostliness: Erskine has designed it to create "critical density": enough people should live there to stimulate local businesses and support a whole range of shops, restaurants, cafés and studios. A quarter of the housing will be low-cost, assigned for local people, integrated with and indistinguishable from private housing - no snobbery here! And Millennium Village will have a school, health centre and community teleservices centre. Alan Cherry, chairman of Countryside Properties, says the scheme is about transplanting a sign out problems before they piece of central London east of get built. At worst, architects the city, "creating a new urbanism with a soft heart".

Buildings have a maximum neers to solve problems with height of 12 storeys to ensure expensive technology that their inhabitants stay in contact should not have been there in with the ground, even where the the first place." scheme is most dense. Green recreation and, according to engineer Chris McCarthy of Bat-

mix of urban qualities with "humanising" factors by offering performance of wood is hard to high levels of security. Public areas will be monitored by CCTV, and the tight grouping of houses will encourage neighbourhood-watch schemes. Forget

about embattled tower-blocks

or lonely suburbs; this is in-

tended to be experimental housing where you know the person next door. Next to social amenity, environmental issues are important, including the rehabilitation of a heavily contaminated site, ground-breaking standards of energy efficiency and longevity. Peter Sharratt, architect with DCAb, says: "Our aim is to de-

and designers use environ-

mental consultants or engi-

Rainwater is prevented from space offers opportunities for leaching into the sub-soil through the use of non-porous piles. Materials are being cho-

be recycled or renewable (the beat at one level; at another, a composite material developed by the Atomic Energy Agency shows promise for flooring and roofing).

The buildings themselves will be modular, allowing for buildings of different sizes and shapes to be produced, and for changes of use - as families grow, or as people set up home businesses. for instance. Tom Barker says: "You don't build the house on site using brickies; you build the pieces in a factory like a car or computer". Assembly will take about three weeks once the site has been prepared, and will enable local people to be involved in construction (and later, modification), without needing special skills.

Perhaps most impressive of gy consumed in the UK and Europe goes into heating, cooling and lighting buildings. Through improvements in insulation, use of alternative energy, and

across the life of a building; the new houses will offer a 30 per cent reduction in water consumption. To help residents control their living environments, each house will be linked to a local area IT network. If you've gone on holiday and forgotten to turn the boiler off. just make a telephone call.

The area network will, in the longer term, enable anyone to plug into the Net or turn the spare bedroom into an office. In the short term, residents will be able to gather local information on bus times, events, shop openings or the weather, simply using a television set.

Millennium Village will go to planning in six weeks. In that time a lot of details will become clearer. But it is already evident that this is a forward-looking project that has the potential to all are the energy savings that change the way we think about the architecture will offer. the places we live. As Bernard About 50 per cent of all ener- Hunt of Hunt Thompson says: "We're leaving behind the pessimistic idea that the best is in the past - that we're at the fagend of history. We are seeking to do better than ever before,



PENNY **JACKSON** 

### How to take off as a chartered surveyor

If chartered surveyors feel they need a more elamorous image, then Richard Allen is a Public Relations dream with a licence to fly. For the past four years the chartered surveyor and fellow of the RICS has been building his own plane. Now D-Day has arrived and it is about to start its trials. If all goes well, he will be zipping over the Channel for a quick survey of a French property in his single-engine plane with RICS emblazoned on the side, and back in time for tea. "I started on it during

the property recession and it has taken about 4,000 construction hours. As surveying work started to come back I got used to dealing with clients on the phone while up to the armpits in epoxy resin." He enthuses about the lowwing tail-dragger with its full-colour moving maps and cockpit panel of his own design. "The beauty of it is I can keep it in a garage, fill it up and take off anywhere. A local farmer near Epsom is going to let me use his field. I will have a range of about 600 nautical miles - almost the

south of France. It is about time surveyors ventured across the Channel. We've been far too insular." Once he has cleared French customs there is no field too far. "Only trouble is the plane is a little tricky to land, but I'm going to be trained by a Red Arrows pilot." Allen made the plane

with the help of his son and

friends and support from over the garden fence. "Its

tail poked out the end of

the workshop, so it caused

some comment." But not as

much as it's about to do, if the flying property doc. gets off the ground.

It has been proving a Herculean task for estate agents to persuade people to put their homes on the market at the same time as they start house-hunting. One manager of a Black Horse agency even drew up an informal list of potential sellers recently so that everyone could see what there would be for sale if only they were all brave enough to take the plunge. But it seems from their latest Home Report as though sellers are gradually becoming more confident of finding something to buy and are increasingly prepared to see their own places marketed immediately. This is also the finding of the National Association of Estate Agents, whose president, Andrew Jeffery, sees the Catch 22 situation resolving itself as more property comes on to the market.

According to Black Horse Agencies, the time it is taking for sales to be completed has speeded up to an average of 11 weeks, the fastest they have seen since the reports began in 1995. One home in 10 sells in a week or less and nearly half in six weeks or less. On average, homes are achieving 95 per cent of the asking price, a figure which has levelled out over the past year. The hot-spots are led by Alton in Hampshire - it has been at the top for the past three surveys with an average selling time of two weeks, followed by Gorleston, Great Yarmouth and Jesmond, Newcastle newcomers to the hot list with three weeks.

### Save the legwork when buying your property - dial a solicitor

You can pay over £500 for a shabby conveyancing service. Or you can pay under £250 for a direct-dial solicitor, and receive a first-rate telephone service. Robert Liebman listens in.

Some first-time buyers are braver than others. When Liz Sowden was negotiating to buy her flat in St Margarets, on the Thames opposite Richmond, she entrusted the conveyance to a solicitor whom she dealt with exclusively by phone and post. "My friend had used Cunnington's and recommended them so I rang for their brochure," says Ms Sowden, who is personal assistant to the managing director of shirtmakers Thomas

Ms Sowden was confident that the entire procedure could be handled by a combination of phone and fax, and that is indeed how it turned out, even including minor bitches. Of Cunnington's seven offices, three are in Essex, and none are remotely near central London, where she works, or west London, where she was then living in rented accommodation. Visiting their offices see the documents first," says partial legal fees."

would have been extremely inconvenient.

"There were problems along the way, but they were sorted out. There were some grey areas in the lease, and my solicitor asked them for clarification. He was diligent in getting his letters satisfactorily answered. Another question involved maintenance and service charges. My solicitor chased them hard to make sure they were fully paid up. "Some of my friends bought

flats and got bills for things that surprised them. My solicitor brought up these issues himself and sent copies to me of his correspondence. He organised a reserve fund from the previous owner so I did not get stuck for the proportion of the service charge that the seller was responsible for." Her total legal bill was £195 plus an additional £29 for phone, fax, postage, photocopying and petty expenses. VAT had to be paid, and she was also responsible for stamp duty and the other disbursements applicable to all property transfers.

For others who might be similarly tempted, she has only one tentative warning. "In my case, there were no negatives. But if there is a drawback to this method, it's that the procedure is only as good as your solicitor. If I had been unhappy, driving all the way to Essex to discuss it would not have been

pleasant." Not all of Cumington's conveyancing clients come away with rock-bottom legal costs. "We always give the client an estimate in writing and we like to

Cunnington's solicitor Stephen Kew. "If someone is subleasing part of a building, for example, a basement flat, the sublease can have two superior leases, and there could be 300 pages of documentation." Cunnington's charges £70 per hour for additional legal work.

Copying letters to their clients is one way that Cunnington's conspires to keep costs down. "Informing clients keeps them happy. It is also cost-effective for us. They don't

'If there is a drawback to this method, it's that the procedure is only as good as your solicitor'

ring up. They know what is going on. They also see from the preliminary correspondence the kind of questions we are asking." Aware of outstanding questions, clients can then speak to the sellers themselves, which helps smooth out and speed the procedure.

Mr Kew says that his firm advises its clients to get a full structural survey, even for brand new properties. "One of our clients did this with a house under construction and they discovered subsidence. They backed away from the purchase. The client lost only the local search fee and

Like all solicitors, directdial solicitors are members of the Law Society and, as such, are insured for claims against them. They can also carry out other legal work often connected to buying property, such as making a will. Electronic mail capability is coming soon to Cunnington's, "but we prefer fax. For legal documents, it's nice to get a signature," says Mr

The Law Society pamphlet Working with your solicitor," while not specifically limited to conveyancing, contains much helpful information. The legal and linguistic intricacies of contracts and leases can not be easily summarised, but some books, such as the Which? Guide to Buying a Flat, admirably explain the basic terminology and principles.

As distance is no object to direct-dial conveyancing, several of them advertise in Yellow Pages throughout the country. The directory will be local to the reader if not to the solicitors

Cunnington's head office, Braintree, Essex, 01376 326868, Crovdon, Surrey, 0181 688 8446, Solihull, West Midlands 0121 *705 686*8. Royal Institution for Chartered

Surveyors, 12 Great George Street, Parliament Square, London SWIP 3 AD, 0171 222 7000. Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A ISX, 0171 242

LEAS - Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service, 8 Maddox Street, London WIR 9PN, 0171 493 3116.

'Private, keep out' may be good advice Living in a house on a private Residents Association. The tential purchasers are happy neighbour. Eventually, he road has a certain snob appeal crunch came when its funds for some people, but it is not al- were too low to pay the annu-

ways an unmitigated blessing. In fact there are two types of pri- cover for up to £500,000 if vate road. A private street is a someone claims for an injury privately maintained road to caused by the condition of the which the public has a right of way. If it falls into disrepair, the local authority has the right under the Highways Act to make it safe and charge residents for the work. And then there's a private road with no public right of way, that must be gated to through traffic once a year to keep its private status.

Private roads are "perceived to have a better cachet," says Nick Thomas, associate director of Hamptons International in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. The nearby Loudwater Private Estate has a number of entries and exits, all gated except the main one. Only the residents have keys. "Private estates tend to be in good areas and you can attribute a premium to a house in a private road setting," says Mr Thomas.

Malcolm Daniel agrees. He lives on the Firs Estate, four private roads of late Twenties properties designated as a conservation area in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. "It's definitely contributed to the value of our properties," says Mr Daniel. The recent addition of white gate posts with "private" signs on the three entrances to the estate and road humps, paid for by the residents, have

also made their mark. Four years ago when the roads on the estate had really begun to deteriorate, Mr Daniel took over as vice chairman and

al insurance premium providing road (cover is provided by the local authority on public roads).

Now, almost all of the residents from the 85 houses pay an annual subscription of £60 a year and a five-year repair plan is in place. It is assumed that each resident owns half of the road in front of their property. "We can't force people to pay," says Mr Daniel, "but as the profile of residents has become much younger they are able to afford it and actually expect to pay something towards the upkeep."

Last year, the committee appointed a contractor to resurface two of the roads. "It was all very new to us," says Mr Daniel, whose day job is as a film editor with the BBC. "We asked a road surveyor, recommended by the local council, to draw us a map of the areas he considered would need immediate attention. If anyone complains that a pothole outside their house isn't being attended to, at least we can show them

the surveyor's report." Would it not be easier to ask the local authority to take over the estate, since it is a through route? "We looked into it," says Mr Daniel, "but they declined. They wanted to make proper footpaths and kerb edg-ing and we don't want all that."

The Land Registry office in London underlines the imporlook very carefully at a proper-ment of three detached houstreasurer of the Firs Estate ty's title deeds to ensure that po- es and the disgruntled

with rights of access and maintenance obligations. Some private roads may have covenants

Having your own road may appeal, but it may also be a big headache, says Fiona Brandhorst.

that restrict redevelopment. The Firs Estate association is there to maintain the roads, for Andre Montaut, director of Almond Construction, sorting out a long-running dispute with a neighbour was vital when he was negotiating to buy a piece of land for redevelopment.

'Private roads have a better cachet. You can attribute a premium to a house there'

The only access was via its own private unsurfaced road. "The chap living next door to the proposed site had had a dispute with the owner over boundaries," says Mr Montaut. Sensing there was money to be made, the neighbour claimed hedge running alongside it was his property. To avoid a lengthy and costly court battle, for which Almond Construction believed there were no grounds, they suggested the planting of six semi-mature trees as a tance of asking a solicitor to screen between the develop-

dropped his claim to the land.

"At least the owners of the new properties won't have any problems over boundaries now, adds Mr Montaut. "And their responsibilities for the private not, Mr Daniel stresses, to sort road have been clearly set out out neighbourly problems. But within the deeds of their property and were accepted by each of their solicitors." When the site is completed, Almond Construction will hand over the road to its residents.

Russell Copp now knows how important it is to look closely at the deeds when buying a house on a private road. When he bought one of 11 former farmworkers' cottages in Thurrock, Essex, he was pleased with the novelty of living on a private road, even though it was more like a "dirt track". "I thought we'd eventually get together with some of the neighbours and put down chippings

to upgrade it," he says. However, the road was still owned by the builder who had converted the cottages and he had other ideas. Last year, he asked each of the residents for £200 to surface the road. "We had no say in who he chose to do the work," remonstrates Mr Copp. "They were a bunch of cowboys and a year on, the surface is breaking up." The conthat part of the road and the tractor also covered up the mains stop-cock outside Mr

Copp's cottage with tarmac. Unsurprisingly, he has refused to pay his share, "I'd advise anyone considering buying in a private road to find out exactly what responsibilities you have and to work together with your neighbours. If you're not Sure, always get legal advice."

n?

Your ideal home may be impossible to find. But design it yourself, and the sky's the limit. Robert Liebman

explains how to achieve the ultimate DIY house

Whoever you are and whatever your dreams, your ideal home is almost certainly on the large, light, luxurious side. You'll need a swimming-pool, of course, and a tennis court and stables for the horses - but apart from these extravagant extras, your imaginary house itself is more spacious and comfortable than the norm.

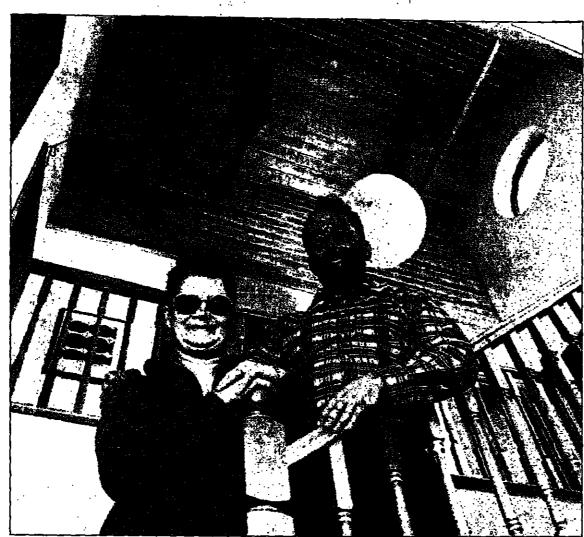
Buying such a home ready-built may be impossible, but by building your own you may get close to the ideal.

Andrea McPherson and Adrian Hirst each owned a house which they had purchased the traditional way. When they set up home together, they decided to sell their respective properties and find a new house. "We looked at old properties to renovate, but they were too costly, both to buy and to update," says Mr Hirst, who works in pharmaceuticals.

Able to finance a self-built home by selling one of their two properties, they started their adventure by confronting the single largest barrier to self-build in Britain; not money, not material, but land. Available, suitably located land on which to build. After an extensive search, they bought a in the roof, and the conservatory can cheap, derelict property from a brewer and knocked it down.

Their new bespoke home had to meet specific requirements. "My son, who is still a student, and my married daughter still needed a family base, and some of our visitors would be wheelchair-users," says Andrea, who is a community worker with the disabled.

Adrian wanted "a workshop for my classic car, and access to peace and quiet. We needed four bedrooms, chose a builder. "The architect prewide doorways and bathrooms for the disabled, and sound-resistant to six different builders, and we hired walls." Tactfully noting that, as a pianist, the one recommended by a friend. Ju-



DIY on a grand scale: Andrea and Adrian financed a self-built home by selling a property

sound-absorbing breezeblock, not

flimsy plasterboard. Light streams

into the hall from a window installed

be entered from either the dining-room

"We read the self-build magazines

and books, and we attended a self-

builders' seminar which had been ad-

vertised locally by the Association of

Self-Build Architects," Adrian ex-

plains. They interviewed several arch-

itects and selected Julian Owen, who

pared tender documents which we sent

With Mr Owen's help, they then

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or the living-room.

had given the seminar.

about design and materials."

They rejected underfloor heating and solar panels as too expensive. "Our architect suggested a slate roof, which would have been three times as expensive as concrete. We decided on concrete. The builder also gave us many options. There were many temptations to exceed the budget."

The end result is more land and more house for less money than typical house owners obtain. "We have a on a quarter-acre of land. I thought it would be a wrench to leave the old house, but it is a joy to leave the leaks behind, the flat roofs, the cracks, the damp," says Andrea.

Construction itself is a relatively process. Lenders specialising in self- Landbank Services (01734 618002).

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Andrea was still in the learning stage, lian Owen also supplied a self-build short, intense interlude in an overall he says that their interior walls are of pack which helped us to start thinking process which, Adrian stresses, requires considerable time, energy and patience:

> actual building was 22 weeks." Was it worth it? "It was a great deal of effort, but we feel privileged, very lucky," says Andrea. "We would defmost challenging and rewarding experience of a lifetime."

For first-time buyers, financing a Julian Owen Associates, Architects, 6 gage. But the new house will come into existence in stages, and some lenders Plotfinder (0891 516526) (50p per are prepared to offer phased in loans minute, approximately three minutes which parallel the house-building total).

build mortgages are listed in the selfbuild magazines Build It, Self Build, and Individual Homes: Homebuilding & Renovating. A fact-sheet brochure available from the Association of Self-Build Architects (ASBA) provides a succinct overview of the major considerations. In greater depth, The Housebuilder's Bible, regularly updated by the author, Mark Brinkley, discusses finance and everything else you want or need to know: design, kit homes, project management, inner skin, outer skin, green issues, planning permission. site supervision, materials, and tile weight comparisons. Possible sites are listed by two companies: Plotfinder and Landbank Services provide databases listing available land and renovation

Julian Owen, the architect, says that "architect's fees should be 7-10 per cent for a full hand-holding service, which includes site appraisal, design, construction drawings and site management." He himself is a campaigner to make more brown site land available to private individuals, and admits that "it helps if you have a relative who owns a large garden. Visit all of the estate agents, but also visit local planning offices and speak to utilities, universities. farmers and other landowners. Generate your own good luck."

The cost of the plot of land should be approximately one-third of the total cost. The average self-build budget is approximately £120.000, with £40,000 earmarked for land. Many self-Page One builders do at least some of the work themselves, especially in the garden and external landscaping. Idiot-proof kits - put this nail into this hole; no. not that one, this one - and marvellously designed homes can easily en-"It took us two years to find the land, tice those who want to lift more than and one year to design the house. The a pen or a shovel.

The 'Individual Homes - Home Building & Renovating Show is at the National hucky," says Andrea. "We would def-initely do it again. It was perhaps the to 22 March (for details, call Centaur Exhibitions, 0171-287 0710; 01527 836

self-built home can be tricky. As the Cumberland Avenue, Beeston, Notnew house that looks like an old one, house does not yet exist, there is no tingham NG9 4DH (0115 922 9831). equity to underwrite a typical mort- Association of Self-Build Architects (ASBA) (0800 387310)

THREE TO VIEW: AT £250,000



Woodend, a 19th century stone house in the North Yorkshire Moors national park at Rosedale Abbey, stands half a mile down a narrow farm track and has open views across the countryside from almost every window. The four-bedroom house has been restored: internal doors replaced with oak veneer and skirtings replaced to match the dado rails. There is a 16ft kinchen with oil-fired Aga, a walk-in pantry, 12ft study, conservatory and 20ft sitting room with stone fireplace. The gardens cover about two thirds of an acre, with a stream running through. GA Town & Country are the agents (01845 522503).



Deep Thatch is a two-storey detached period cottage on Hayling Island, popular with weekend sailors. The three bedroom, two-bathroom house with large kitchen/breakfast room and dining room, has beamed ceilings, leaded-light windows and open fireplaces. The gardens are secluded and include a walled barbecue area and garage block. There's also a barn, which can provide extra accommodation. The agents are Henry Adams and Partners (01243 533377).



Winterfold, on the edge of a village four miles from Weymouth in Dorset, is a converted former barn. The stone-built four-bedroom house was converted and extended more than 20 years ago and includes a 15ft hall with adjustable bookshelves under the stairs, making it suitable as a study area, On the first floor, there's a 20ft studio/5th bedroom with exposed stone walls, pine vaulted ceiling and a French door opening onto a balcony. There are large gardens, including a workshop with stable door. Agents are Symonds & Sampson (01305 265058).

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